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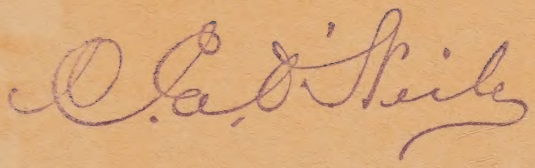

DR KEANE'S SERMONS

PREACHED ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS

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SERMONS

PREACHED ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS

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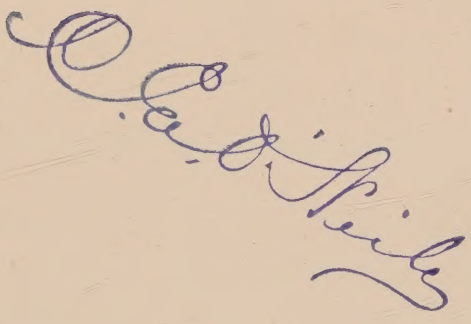
BY

Very Rev. Dr. KEANE, O.P.



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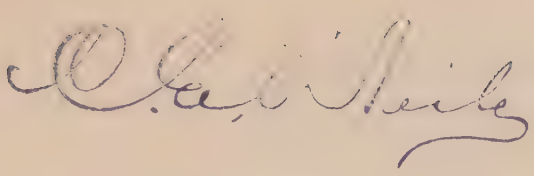

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DR KEANE'S DISCOURSES.

BLESSING OF AN ABBOT.

PREACHED AT THE SOLEMN BENEDICTION AND INSTALLATION OF THE RIGHT REV. CAMILLUS BEARDWOOD, FIRST LORD ABBOT OF THE CISTERCIAN MONASTERY, MOUNT ST JOSEPH'S, ROSCREA, 30*th October*, 1887.

My Lords, Very Rev. Fathers, and dearest faithful in Christ—The ceremony we have come hither to witness is no common experience in our lives. Three hundred years and more have gone since last an abbot was blessed in Ireland in presence of the assembled faithful. Hence there is for us here a novel interest, and it is no wonder that we have come in large numbers and from distant places to witness the sacred things that are being done. This ceremonial is not a show of varicoloured vestments and many lights and solemn chant and mysterious movements. It has not been designed to gratify the sight and the hearing, or to awaken vain curiosity. If heavenly truth bids us, whether we eat or drink, or whatever else we do, to do all for the glory of God, clearly our presence here, and our share in this solemn function, should be made an occasion for giving honour to the Most High. For this we have but to surrender ourselves to the suggestive influence of the imposing scene, and ask—what really mean those mystic rites that are being acted? Behind that material veil of ceremonial, what religious truth and purpose lie concealed? This body which our eyes gaze upon, what soul and life does it enclose to inspire lessons of heavenward guidance? What memories does this day

awaken to touch our hearts with emotional interest? What promise does it show forth to gladden us with cheering hope?

First of all, dearly beloved, I invite your attention to the direct import of the ceremony, especially of the more striking forms which belong to it. In the opening of the procedure there was read an authorisation, without which no Abbot could have been blessed here to-day. It issued from the centre of all sacred jurisdiction, the ruler of the Universal Church. Not the smallest detail of ceremonial but bore upon it the mark of the same authorisation, so that the prelate interrogated and exhorted, blessed and prayed, seated himself and rose, and performed all his movements according to the laws which the Master of all prelates has framed. Blessed be the Lord! it is an assurance, amongst many others, that we are members of the one fold, under the one supreme Shepherd set to rule over God's kingdom on earth.

Acting on the pontifical mandate, the Archbishop blessed and conferred upon the Abbot-elect the insignia of his sacred office. He first bestowed the staff. It is the symbol of pastoral authority, one of whose functions is to use the rod of disciplinary correction for the well-being of the flock. Among those who dwell within these walls there is to be no tolerance for evil passions. Every vice that would draw them away from God must be expelled, and they have come together and elected a man to stand at their head, and the Church to-day placed that staff in his hand to make it known to him and to them that in the name and under the authority of God he is to correct every failing brother, and repel every influence that would intrude upon the sanctity of the place. Then was blessed and bestowed the ring. A ring signifies the union of love that binds spouse to spouse—that binds the religious to the Divine Master. It suggests to him who received it the fidelity wherewith he is to discharge his solemn trust. Often have men undertaken the government of their fellows and won the fame of successful administration, but in how many instances have their zeal and solicitude endured only while nature relished the work, or self-love cherished hope

of aggrandisement? Here is pledged a devotion to duty that shall have no admixture of selfish motive or thought, and that shall be stronger than death. Sacrifice of his mind's peace, of repose for wearied frame, forfeiture of very life, if needs be, must the pastor prepare for when he accepts at the hands of the Divine Shepherd the charge of which that ring reminds him. Finally, the Abbot was crowned with the graceful mitre—the helmet of defence and salvation—as the liturgical form describes it. It typifies the strength of the helmet to protect the Christian warrior against the enemies of the Lord, whilst it is the sign of graceful dignity on him whom justice and truth adorn. When the mitre was placed upon his brow, the Archbishop led him to the abbatial throne, and setting the crozier in his hand, conferred upon him the plenary power of governing this monastery in all that relates to its spiritual and temporal weal. Then the new Abbot went round the holy Temple, and, with the aroma of his new-gotten grace fresh glowing upon him, blessed us all, whilst we sang in fervent *Te Deum* our grateful praise to the Most High.

Dearly beloved, wherefore do we rejoice, and wherefore make thanksgiving? Because we behold to-day the formal completion of the process of establishing a new home for the Cistercian brotherhood. Because on this day in the firmament of the Irish Church a new star comes forth to shine. Because to-day is uplifted on this favoured spot the banner of the monastic idea and the monastic life, and, since we have the discrimination begotten of faith and the appreciative faculty of Catholic feeling, the unfolding of that standard bids us profess that this is a day which the Lord hath made, and that we should be glad and rejoice therein.

The monastic spirit and life is something which rather the piety of the heart than wit of intellect can understand. Like all that belongs to the reasonable service of the Most High, it is based on certain principles; it has a specific purpose at which it aims, with ways and means for attaining it. The principles of monasticism are certain truths which lie at the root of it; which have suggested it to men;

which explain it, and the remembrance of which in the monk himself maintains its life and fervour. These truths have been taught in the Gospel, and though men choose to ignore them, they stand in the forefront of the message which has been divinely delivered to all Christian peoples. First among them is the great axiom of Christian philosophy which proclaims the vanity of all that is of earth and that passes with time, and the contrasted reality and worth of the fadeless treasures of Heaven. Nothingness is the name for all possessions of earth, and as the flight of the wind is the passing enjoyment of time, but precious beyond all our esteeming are the enduring goods of eternity. The works of God scattered around us, how fair soever and noble, cannot fill man's mighty heart; but the God Who made them is infinite perfection—He is the unfathomable ocean of truth which the mind may study for ever—He is the world of delight which can fill the heart with eternal rapture. Added to the emptiness of earth and time, there comes to suggest the monastic spirit the warning emphatically uttered in the Gospel on the danger and evil of this world. The Eternal God "was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" (St John i. 10). Our Lord Jesus Christ, standing before the judgment-seat of the Roman governor, declared that His kingdom was not of this world. He cast a slight upon the world when He taught that the gaining all it can offer to man's ambition avails naught, if we suffer the loss of our immortal souls. He told His disciples they were not of the world, for He had chosen them out of the world —that for this the world hated them—and if their simple minds were amazed, that they, poor, weak, unknown, who had done no man wrong, should be hated by the world, their Divine Master either removed or increased their perplexity when He subjoined: "If the world hate you, know ye that it hated me before you" (Ibid. xv. 18). Wherefore it was with wise zeal for their soul's security the great Apostle told the Romans—and the Spirit of God speaks the warning to every Christian, and the hearts that seek the cloister are they that ponder it well: "Be not conformed to this world" (Romans xii. 2). Finally,

brethren, and alone sufficient, were there no other considerations to cast abroad in the Catholic Church the inspiration of the monastic idea, are the paramount claims of God on man. He is resplendent with a majesty which calls for life-long worship; He has been outraged by sin in such wise as to prompt the utmost generosity of expiation; His bounty has poured itself on man in Divine munificence, and merits the grateful enthusiasm of our fondest love. For this did holy men, while yet the Church was young, go apart from their fellows, put on a distinctive dress, build themselves cloisters, and there, through the lightsome day and in the solemn night, at sound of holy bell and under the lead of vigilant chiefs, adopt a life which they meant to be an abiding homage to the majesty of God, a reparation to his offended justice, and an uninterrupted thanksgiving for His all-gracious bounty.

Founded on those principles and for those noble aims, monasticism employs to realise its sacred purpose three effective means. In the beginning of its system is placed the potent agency of solitude. In solitude the voice of the Lord is heard, and the light of His countenance shines clear when the world's glare is removed. It was when Moses, tending Jethro's flock, had driven it "into the inner parts of the desert" that the Lord appeared and spoke to him from the burning bush His designs for the deliverance of His people. It was in the wilderness of Sinai that God was pleased to give the law; and, even in that secluded place, He called Moses apart, set round the mountain an enclosure within which the people were forbidden to enter; into that enclosure Moses went, up the mountain-side he strode, and, upon its summit, with enveloping smoke to separate it yet more from all observation of men, the Lord gave His secrets to His holy servant. The prophet Osee spoke the promise of God to repentant Israel, that He would allure her and lead her into the desert, and there would speak to her heart. For, truly, the din of the world deafens the ear of the soul; blinding mists arise from creatures to obstruct the light of the Divine Spirit; the engrossing solicitude of earthly cares shuts out the soul's

interest—all these things impede our recognition of the salutary fears and the cheering hopes of eternity. Because of this St Paul told the Corinthians that there were those in whom the God of this world had blinded their minds, "that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ . . . should not shine upon them" (2 Cor. iv. 4). But when the world has been placed at a distance, the eyes taken off its distracting sights, and the ears closed to its sounds—when one enters the regions of peace where there strike him only the symbols and pictures of the spiritual world—then does the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit speak, and its music is heard in the heart; the sunlight of His face beams unhindered upon the soul; the truth of God is revealed before him, and grace begins its sanctifying mission.

I have said *begins* its mission, because solitude is but the disposition preparing the way; it only creates the atmosphere in which the work of sanctification is effected. Breathing this atmosphere, the man of faith receives from Providence a twofold instrument for forming within him the perfect Christian character. One was taught by the Divine Master when He laid down in the Gospel the great law of Christian life: "If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (St Mark viii. 34). Let him deny himself. Eternal Wisdom has ruled it; His sacred lips have spoken it; the concordant practice of His saints has echoed it; let him deny himself whosoever would walk the ways of grace. True it is, God created this very self which is to be denied; our nature and all that rightly belongs to it is from Him, and is good. But sin has introduced disorder among our appetites, and, looking upon nature in its fallen state, He has made it the prime condition of His earnest service that its rebellious voice be silenced and its pernicious desires trampled on; that a system of restraint be entered upon worthy to be called a carrying of the cross, and that only when we stand upon the ruins of vanquished self may we proclaim the triumph of Divine grace and cherish the hope of eternal life. *Let him deny himself!* Hear it with pain, ye slaves of passion; hear it in querulous spirit, ye friends of this world; hear it with impious scoff, ye whose judg-

ment pride has confounded; but hear it in reverent acquiescence, all ye who believe the word of Christ, the Son of the living God; hear it in humble thankfulness, ye cloistered religious, for it gives the assurance that ye have entered upon the way that leads to Heavenly joy.

Even had the stern rule not been formulated in the sacred book, the monk would reflect that Gethsemani is no idle dream, nor Calvary a fable; he contemplates an enfeebled form opening its arms to take upon it a weighty cross, struggling under it up a rugged hill-side, affixed to it by nails, and after three agonising hours, drooping its head in death; and infallible truth has taught him that that outraged and bleeding form was the Monarch of Creation. And he reasons with himself, as St Bernard reasoned, as we all must reason who bear the Christian name, that if the head be thorn-crowned and dishonoured it is not for the members to seek the soft and pleasing things of life. When the pressure of the cross threatens at times to overbear his power of endurance, he recalls that " that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory " (2 Cor. iv. 17)—that what afflicts is fleeting, and what will rejoice shall abide for ever. Strengthened by this Divine teaching, the secluded religious embraces the discipline of the cross. With what sanctifying result they set before us in sacred art; for we have often seen painted the saintly picture with celestial halo round his head, the scourge lying on one side, and on the other a white lily. It is to tell that by the self-denial represented in the scourge, he attained the purity of soul of which the chaste lily is the symbol.

Yet more, however, is needed to make the monk in his grand reality. He flies the allurements of the world and takes up the mystic cross, but this in order that, the world and self being put away, he may rise to union with God. Dead to the world, and dead to self, he lives to God, with God, in God, and for God, and this life with God is the life of prayer. Entering the cloister he elevates his soul to the Lord, and there he leaves it in the regions of light and grace and worshipful love. All that he has abandoned

he finds again in God; but more really, more perfectly. His eyes have closed on the sights of earth, but, if he be true to the law of his vocation, in long and fervid prayer he looks upon the beauty of God; his ears, deaf to the sounds of the world, drink in the sweetness of the voice of God; his mind, withdrawn from speculations of time, roams through the depths of eternal truth; his heart has frozen against the delights that perish, but only to be inflamed by the overmastering love of the All-perfect Deity. All this, and much else that I cannot recount, is prayer; for prayer is union with God, and God is all! Ah! they pity the inmates of the monasteries and judge their lot a gloomy one; they profess themselves unable to understand how nature sustains the burden of monastic life; there are those to be found who make the cloistral silence, the overshadowing cowl, the rigorous rule a mark for the shafts of ridicule—but, oh! the ridicule—no, for that were wrong —but the compassion—yea, the compassion is due to the world for the desolate gloom that overhangs it, all unconscious of its evil state. For, lo! in those proud days when men have multiplied their conveniences and luxuries, and multiplied the while their needs, they have emancipated themselves from one need—so in their blindness they judge it—they have rid themselves of God and of the sense of the need of God. I speak of the world now as I look upon it abroad among the majority of nations, and I include only in small degree and in few things our own faithful land.

God is made present to man by prayer, so far as His presence means blessings for our souls. In prayer we see Him, touch Him, are illumined and strengthened by Him; and prayer they have largely abolished from the world. Who now among the princes of the earth takes counsel with the Lord of Hosts ere he puts his armies into the field? Who now in the deliberations of statesmen, save as an empty form, invokes the Spirit of God for wisdom? What momentous enterprises are commended to Heaven's blessing? Where is the brave and eccentric Christian who, sitting to table in the public inn, signs himself with the symbol of redemption and asks the Lord to bless his meat?

Dearly beloved, I ask it in humiliation, for here the indictment touches Irish Catholicity, what Catholic merchant, in the large centres of population, pays heed to the Church's ordinance that on her solemn feasts the busy wheel shall be still, the din of commerce be hushed, and the thoughts and energies of men be given to their souls' concern? Alas! sacred things, eternal things, have lost their value, and men are striving with a success worse than most dismal failure, to do without God. A maddening wave of morbid activity, destitute of mediaeval greatness, hurries men along in a flood of destructive frivolity, and only a faithful few, standing upon the Rock of Ages, gaze upon and speak to and love the eternal God. From His own earth, whose foundations He laid; from the world, which He sustains by His power Divine; from the hearts of men, for whose well-being He died, has He been shut out by the practical atheism of the day. Oh! how they mourned in the days of Elias, when for three years the heavens were closed, and no refreshing rain came to nourish the earth! But it was done by the Lord in His just anger. When the peace of Eden was broken by Adam's sin, and the faithless pair were driven forth into gloomy exile, the arm of the Most High shut the bolts of Heaven's gates, and He locked Himself away from guilty man. But now, when the days have come for which Abraham and Isaac and Jacob sighed, when the dispensation of grace has been established, and the Heavenly Father would embrace all in benign love, man has drawn the bolts of his earthly dwelling-place in the face of God, and shut Him out from the human creation.

Therefore are we glad to-day, and thankful that you, my Lord Abbot, have received the Church's solemn benediction, empowering you to rule this house in which God shall be first and last—in all and through all: His name upon its corner-stone and His sign upon its highest pinnacle; His presence living in every place, His spirit breathing in every soul, and upon every lip the chant of His praise. Day after day, and many a time each day, the long train shall file into this holy Temple, and they shall proclaim, in the venerable psalmody of David, that "the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods"; and until

their voices are stilled in death the chorus shall sound aloud by night and day, that the praise of the Lord, even as His mercy and glory, may endure for ever.

Dearly beloved, this ceremonial, interesting and gladsome for what we have considered, awakens memories, oh! how touching! Sad they are, yet very dear; and, though memories of defeat, glorious withal. We recall the time when to gaze on the hallowed portal of monastic pile, no son of Erin needed to traverse long miles of way, for like the stars in the heavens at night were they scattered throughout the land. Ours is the wonderful race in whose supernatural generation the era of blossom and fruit followed fast upon sowing time, for straightway the seed was cast upon our soil the fruit of religious glory sprang up to mark us as blessed among all the nations of the earth. From Ireland's chief city on the eastern shore to sea-beat Arran in the west; from Bangor to Lismore; in old Clonfert; in peaceful Glendalough; in sweet Innisfallen —what hallowed shrines were hers! Beside us in Roscrea St Cronan built his abbey, and saints unnumbered in every province and county. And, oh! what wealth of religious glory did our motherland then boast of when from one monastic choir in the beautiful valley of the Nore at Jerpoint one thousand three hundred Cistercians sent forth upon the midnight air the chorus of jubilant worship; when Cashel's rock poured out upon the plain the ethereal voice of praise; when lordly Shannon bore down to the sea the tuneful melody from ancient Clonmacnoise! It was of those times they told the beautiful legend that angels in Heaven often laid down their harps of gold, flew out through the pearl gates, and, swooping from the sky, seated them on the clouds that overshadowed this emerald isle of the ocean that they might listen to the thrilling music of her monastery choirs. Who shall tell but it was those fervent prayers which won for Ireland the grace of bold endurance in the dark and evil days? Who shall tell that the faith which is ours to-day has not been merited by the sanctity of those glorious monks of old?

But, alas! our fair peace, our holy bliss, our world-wide dissemination of the Word of Life, became the envy of

spirits of evil. The day came when the sun rose up to shine upon the shelled and smoking ruins of our island's holy fanes. Their

> "——glory in a crimson tide went down
> Beneath the cloven hoof—
> Altar and priest, mitre and cope and crown,
> And choir and arch and roof."

Memories of the past! Yes, they come to us to-day. And the future? Does not a gleam of gladsome promise shine upon us from what we behold? When Judas Maccabeus uprose in the hour of his country's affliction, and, with a gallant few, smote and routed 65,000 chosen men of Syria, he assembled his people in the joy of their victory, and said: "Behold our enemies are discomfited; let us go up now to cleanse the holy places and to repair them. . . . And they went up into Mount Sion. And they saw the Sanctuary desolate . . . and shrubs growing up in the courts as in a forest, and the chambers joining to the Temple thrown down. . . . And they cleansed the holy places. . . . Then they took whole stones according to the law and built a new altar according to the former, and they built up the holy places . . . and brought in the candlestick . . . and they put incense upon the altar . . . and they gave light in the Temple . . . and there was exceeding great joy among the people" (1 Maccabees iv. 36-58). Brethren, we have had enemies who came in cruel power, and when they had swept through the land and wrought their iniquitous will, all was lost save honour, the honour of fidelity to God on high. Our enemies were the unholy demon of heresy, generating fanaticism and blinding prejudice, racial hate, greed of wealth, the lying spirit, proud oppression of the poor, and all that avails to sunder the harmonious relations of peoples. By the force of truth and justice we have encountered the vast resources of our foes; we have smote them and all but routed them in ignominious defeat. And is it not nigh the time to devise with ourselves and to say—Behold—our enemies are discomfited; let us go up now to cleanse the holy places and repair them; let us gather the scattered stones; build them again into sacred piles; renew

the Temples, and repeople with the sons of God the cloisters that have long been desolate? And, surely, this festal day bids the cheering hope spring up. It was when the cloud was about to form over our land, more than seven hundred years ago, and the night of her bondage was approaching, there came to our shores a band of Cistercians, sent by St Bernard from Clairvaux, and at Mellifont they set them down. Here are the inheritors of their time-honoured habit, of their sanctifying rule, of their heavenly purposes of silence and labour and prayer, planting the standard of Bernard on the plains of Tipperary when the blush of the dawn is colouring the hill-tops, and we await, with trust in God, the sunburst of our freedom. It is an omen we may not disregard. It bids us hope for the land that bore us, that when freedom's fight is won her mighty bosom shall heave with the emotion of faith, and she shall cry aloud to earth and Heaven: Give me back my greatest joy; my proudest glory, the brightest jewel of my ancient crown restore. To taste the liberty of other countries I have struggled long and bravely; but, to share their moral slavery—to be allied with the infatuated States of Europe in a confederation of forgetfulness of God, absorption in this material world, and disregard of the issues of eternity? No—ten thousand times—no! Let me have the rational blessings of time, but, dearer than all, let me have faith and hope and love and prayer and God. Give me back my storied shrines; rekindle the lamp in Kildare's holy fane, and from the centre to the sea light me once again with the sacred beauty that shall never, never fade.

Great Lord of Heaven! make it be. In Thy predestinating love send forth the decree that when our country shall have put forth off the last of her fetters, and uplifted her head among the nations, she shall wear upon her queenly brow the diadem of religious splendour, and be in her triumphant power, as she was in her lowly weakness, best-loved of all Thy peoples!

PROSELYTISM IN DUBLIN.

Appeal in aid of the "Sacred Heart Home," Drumcondra. Preached in St Saviour's Church, Dublin, *3rd February*, 1889.

The Gospel of this fourth Sunday after Epiphany is taken from the eighth chapter of St Matthew, and is as follows: "At that time, when Jesus entered into a boat, His disciples followed Him; and behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the ship was covered with waves; but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awakened Him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them: Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising He commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey Him?"

"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" In the sequence of the Sunday Gospels, which usually set before us the history of our Lord's beneficent miracles, we find frequent commendations spoken by Him of the faith of those on whose behalf He exercised His Divine Power. "Thy faith has made thee whole—" He said to one. "O woman, great is thy faith—" was His exclamation to the woman of Canaan after she had patiently pleaded for her daughter's healing. In these and similar passages there is meant by faith that trust in our Blessed Redeemer's power and goodness which brought the needy around Him to seek His favours. There is another sense attaching to the word, the sense which we learned in our catechism. Faith is that virtue whereby we believe all things that God has revealed, and believe them because of His unerring truth.

It fits in with the special purpose for which I have come to speak to-day that I should ask your attention to some considerations on faith in this, its dogmatic, signification. It is wise for us to seek to be impressed with the vivid knowledge of the place which faith holds among the various blessed things that concern our souls, and to realise as best we may the need we have thereof.

Let him who would see the necessity of faith reflect in this way. Here we are, portions of the world's actual population. You all on whom I just now gaze are endowed with a real existence. That existence shall never cease: you are eternal! Cast the glance of your minds into the future; it is doubtful whether you shall sit there listening to the preacher when twenty years shall have passed. But certain it is, as the very Being of God, that when twenty years—a hundred—a thousand years—shall have come and gone, you shall be—somewhere! And after time, with its possible countless cycles of centuries, shall have wearied and ended, your enduring existence shall go on for ever and for ever! Ah! brethren, there is the thought that makes servants of God. And there is the thought that takes the servants of God and perfects them into saints of God. From this solemn truth comes the light that governs our appreciation of the joys of time; for a day shall come when a mighty angel, his right foot upon the sea and his left foot upon the earth, shall swear by Him Who liveth for ever and ever that time shall be no more (Apoc. x.)—its joys, no more; its glory, no more. We measure hence, likewise, and estimate wisely the evils of life: if ill-fortune befall us or cruel injustice be done, how good and comforting to know that trials of earthly life shall end, and, whereas wrong is done in time, the rectification shall be eternal. This eternity towards which we hasten is divided into two departments: there shall be an eternal sweet and an eternal bitter; an eternal joy and an eternal woe. We and all whose turn it is now to dwell on earth, and whom each fleeting instant hurries onward towards eternity, shall be for ever in the light or in the gloom; in the distant by and by, when time shall all have passed, we shall be either enthroned in the luminous

splendour of the kingdom or housed in the dismal prison of Hell—there to abide for ever.

Now, though eternity be the great all which overshadows the nothingness of time, yet it is time that determines our eternity. The Divine Judge will, on the great doomsday, only speak the sentence which we in life are preparing for Him. And our safety in that momentous crisis shall depend on one condition—the possession in our souls of supernatural life. If supernatural life, called likewise sanctifying grace, be found glowing within us in the hour when we shall stand before Him, the blissful inheritance shall be ours; should our souls be deprived of this life of grace we shall be lost. This life of the soul depends absolutely on faith—depends, I mean, in a negative sense; if faith be wanting our souls are dead. No work can be done unless a beginning thereof be made: faith is the beginning of supernatural life. No tree can rear his grand form into the air and spread out his lordly branches unless there be a root beneath. Faith is the root of justification. You cannot raise the massive walls of a building, still less adorn it with beauteous decoration and crown it with graceful minaret, unless there be a foundation: of all the mystic edifice of the saving and sanctifying of a soul the foundation is faith. Take away faith and there is no sanctification—no salvation—possible. "Without faith," said the Lord, through his great Apostle, "it is impossible to please God." Hence, in the commencement of our soul's history God gives us faith. It is communicated to us as a habit by the Sacrament of Baptism. Once bestowed, it can be lost only by formal sin against faith itself. Since we believe the entire catalogue of revealed truths not because we have seen their truth directly, not because our reason has satisfied itself by intrinsic examination of them, but because of the authority of the infinite wisdom and veracity which has manifested them, our disbelief of one item in the series, whilst we have sufficient evidence of its revelation by God, strikes at the principle of faith, and in doing so, destroys the virtue in the soul. Hence, ever since Christianity was established, he who failed to accept any point of belief was regarded as having

suffered shipwreck of his faith, and set himself on the way of reprobation.

By what means, and through what channels, has the revelation of God come to mankind? Did the Creator whisper His secrets to man in dreams? Did He deliver His mysteries by way of individual illumination? No; the Christian world knows, and the pagan world—the entire world—knows, that Jesus Christ selected twelve men, consigned to them His doctrine, and bade them in His name, and with the sanction of His authority, preach them to the whole race of man. Why were they to preach? For the saving of men's souls. Were men's souls to be saved only during the lifetime of the Apostles? Was not God to be served, eternal condemnation to be avoided, and Heaven's glory to be striven for by men to the end of time? Therefore, unto the end of time those twelve men, or the inheritors of their commission, were to speak and expound to the human family, and that in Christ's name, the body of His doctrine. Those twelve Apostles were the Church of their age; those who have succeeded to their commission are the Church of all ages, and it is through the Church the Most High has communicated His revelations to men. Therefore the faith without which there is no supernatural life, no salvation, is faith in the teaching of the Church, which delivers to us the message of God's Sovereign Wisdom. Not many Churches, not even two Churches—He could only found and bless one—so reason tells, and in the sacred volume it is: "One Lord," "One Faith," "One Baptism," "One Fold," and "One Shepherd."

Where is this Fold? Where is this Shepherd? Where this oneness? Where this authoritative propounding unto men of the teaching of Christ? There, surely, where alone they pretend to be. Unity and a Divine teaching mandate are claimed by the Church of Rome and by none other; wherefore if a Church of Christ there be at all, to her must they be conceded. The sum, therefore, of the fundamental requirements divinely prescribed to all those who would be saved is: acceptance of every truth propounded as revealed of God by the Church of Rome. Will not a good life save us? If from a good life you

exclude this bounden belief in the Church—No! Will not the just man, the peaceful man, the kindly man, be saved? My dearest brethren, "search the Scriptures." Open your Bible at the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. There read of the *good man*, Cornelius. The Holy Spirit tells us he was "a religious man," a man "fearing God with all his house," one who gave "much alms to the people," and, higher commendation still—hear it and be confounded, ye sluggish Catholics—he was a man "*always praying to God!*" Now, the Almighty sent an angel to this man, and bade him send men to Peter, and "he (Peter) will tell thee," said the heavenly visitant, "what thou must do." And the heavens were opened to Peter, and from the awful heights there came to him a voice commanding him to receive Cornelius into the Church. Why this wondrous providence? Why send down an angel and speak to the Apostle from the heavens? Dearly beloved, the Lord, Who does not things that are superfluous, saw that Cornelius, the religious man, the alms-giving man, the God-fearing man, the prayerful man, was *outside the way of salvation*, and in His mercy He brought him into the one true Church, which was under the headship of Peter.

The necessity of faith being such as we have seen, how great is the calamity of one who loses faith? How incomparably great the crime of him who would devise and seek to compass the destruction of faith in his fellow-man! May we not rightly think that only one creature of God could conceive such a design?—he, the reprobate angel, who, having lost his place in Heaven, has sworn ever to labour that man reach not the glory from which himself so basely fell. Yes, Satan alone desires to rob souls of faith, and whereas we know by the name of proselytisers those who ply this dark trade among us, I find that the first proselytiser was Satan, and they who bear the name and do the evil thing now are of this foul spirit the foul "members." It was in Eden's beautiful garden proselytising began. There were the two first human creatures, in all the freshness of their being and glorious endowments, and true faith was theirs. The serpent crept towards Eve

and, with alluring blandishments, sought to shake her faith. He denied the word which the Supreme Creator had spoken to her, and he promised her the enjoyment of the rosy fruit and grand things that were to follow would she renounce her belief in what God had said—renounce her faith. And he, who was a proselytiser as well as a liar, "from the beginning," when Christian faith was instituted by the Incarnate Son of God, straightway sought to rob men of this heavenly blessing. Our Lord had prayed His Father so to preserve His disciples that where He was they also should be. Satan likewise desired, and resolved to effect, that down in the dismal place where *he* was men also should be, and for this he would destroy their faith. He heard our Lord say: "He that believeth not shall be condemned"; and he said in satanic malice: "Then as I yearn for their condemnation I shall strive that they *believe not*—I shall rob them of faith." He assailed them first by open force of persecution. With rack and sword and fire; with the ravenous beasts in the great Flavian amphitheatre, he strove to crush faith, and, blessed be God! in vain. In later times, in these our times, he seeks the same end by secret ways, by a spirit, a system of teaching and a system of law-making which indirectly attack the Divine revelation, and, alas! to a large degree success crowns his striving.

There is amongst the nations a local Church, which, in a peculiar sense, is the Church of God in miniature. I mean the Irish Church, faithful beyond all. Against her did the demon war by open persecution; for three hundred years he plied his destructive agencies against her, but only to fail. Ireland's faith rose from the ground to which it was beaten, and, blood-stained, hacked, and wearied though she was from the deadly combat, she sang a glorious triumph over every malevolent effort of the Evil One. But now he tries his secret system. Round this island of ours the devil has winged his flight, and wherever he descried the unholy progeny of the few renegades who in the dark and evil days of persecution forsook their religion and God, he called them to them. They were his, and he aggregated them into a society. In that society—they are

the proselytisers, the " soupers," as they have been called since the awful famine time—there are two classes. All serve the devil; but some for love, and other some for money. They sally forth into the lanes and courts where dwell the hungry and ill-clad poor. They have no beating of drums nor clang of arms like the more honest Oliver Cromwell. No; the smile of peace is on their faces, its unctuous tone upon their lips, and gifts of peace in their hands they bear. They enter the houses of the poor, where they know that dear little children are pale, and cold, and lacking their needful sustenance. They enter as robbers—aye—worst of all robbers, for they rob the poor, and the thing of which they rob them is the pearl of great price—the inestimable treasure of faith. They enter as murderers, and murderers darkest of all in their evil designs, and effecting direst ruin upon their hapless victims. What harm does the mysterious being who has created the fame of Whitechapel? Let him be, with his—dearly beloved, may I call it?—yes—comparatively trivial evil-doing. But let not the ruthless Dublin proselytiser be, who takes the knife to pierce and hack and slay the souls of God's cherished ones. They enter as adulterers. The adulterer whispers to the spouse, and, in cases of enhanced infamy, to the needy spouse, that he may lead her to violate the pledge she made to a man before the altar. The foul proselytiser speaks the word of deadly malice to the poor Catholic whereby she may be led to forswear the solemn pledge uttered unto the Most High God at the baptismal font. They enter as did Judas to Gethsemani. By a kiss did the traitor deliver his Divine Master to His enemies; with an embrace and a kiss for the poor little children, with soft words and alluring promises, do these black wretches betray to the devil who sends them the souls of those young ones, and it has been written that what is done to the least of those who believe in Him is done to Himself. Finally, they go into the houses of the poor as the very impious demon; yea, those men and women of Dublin are human symbol and agents of Satan.

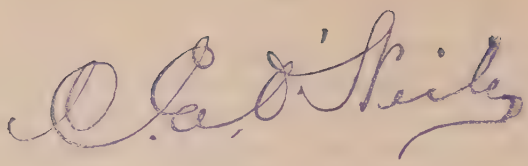
Take them who do this evil work for money, knowing its immorality. Surely they are satanic in their spirit and

mission. Take the others, the "well-meaning" proselytisers, the fanatics. These some Catholics, not duly enlightened, incline to make excuse for; but learn their malice, by brief reflection. It is the theory of Protestantism that Catholics can be saved as easily as Protestants. They contrast, in truth, this charitable tenet with the cruel doctrine of exclusive salvation which Catholics hold. The tempting proselytisers, then, ask the starving parents to give the child away from a religion in which they do not even pretend to believe that salvation is imperilled, and to enroll it in a sect wherein three hundred millions of the human race are assured salvation cannot be found. Behold their malice, and the reason why they, with the worse than Venetian bravos who work the same evil for their salaries, are rightly categorised among the trusty friends and ministers of Satan.

There is another proof, and one of special interest, to show the alliance of those wretches with Satan, and the identity with him which they have assumed. When the serpent, the Evil Spirit, had effected the ruin of our first parents, God spoke in His wrath and said to him: "Because thou hast done this thing . . . I will put enmities between thee and the woman." He, then, and she, and all they, are of the serpent, between whom and *the woman* there is enmity. Brethren, you know who *the woman* is—the beautiful, glorious, all-holy Mother of God—praised for ever be her name! The only woman whom these wicked heretics hate is she who once held a Child in her arms and pressed Him to her bosom—that Child hers, and that Child the Monarch of Creation! Oh! it surely seems impossible to believe—it is not impossible to the converting power of grace—it seems all but impossible to conceive, that the Supreme Judge could on the great accounting day bid to stand upon His right hand and go up through the clouds with His elect the men and women who taught those children, whom you now see ranged upon the altar steps, to hate His own most blessed Mother.

To protect the interests of souls and of God from these evil beings has the Sacred Heart Home been established.

To-day its zealous managers appeal for your support in the noble mission they have undertaken. Readily would you strive to save the child borne down the rushing river to destruction; prompt and brave effort would you make to save the helpless prey of ravening wolves. What things are those to speak of beside the peril of the immortal souls for whom Divine blood has been shed? Give your money to-day, rich and poor. Let the rich richly bestow; let the fairly opulent give generously; and you, the poor, give something. Poor men, spare the price of your whisky and porter, and lay it on the plate which the collector will present to you to-day. Spare the price of one day's tobacco, and give it for God's sake. Forego for a space some lawful but costly recreation to swell the funds of the noble Institution that appeals to you. All—give largely and give with supernatural motive. And if you do, there is ground for trusting that on the Great Day when the Divine Judge will search all hearts, though He may see that you have sinned through human frailty, He will remember that here, on this day of grace, you struck a blow against satanic malice and for the saving of innocent souls. The blessing His mercy will then award you, may it be this—that He will give you entrance to the Sacred Heart Home, into His own Most Beautiful Heart—there to find shelter, and peace and bliss for ever. Amen.



FATHER MATHEW, APOSTLE OF TEMPERANCE.

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, CORK, ON THE CENTENARY OF FATHER MATHEW'S BIRTH, 10*th October*, 1890.

"LET us praise men of renown, and our fathers in their generation; men of great power and endowed with their wisdom, showing forth in the prophets the dignity of prophets, and ruling over the present people, and by the strength of wisdom instructing the people in most holy words" (Ecclus. xliv).

On this day the Church accepts in the name of the Most High the material work which gives to this sacred Temple its long-desired consummation. With religious rite we crown the edifice, as with religious rite its first stone was laid.

If there be any here, now in the evening of life, who witnessed the inauguration of this sacred work, perhaps they remember that when the prelate blessed the place where this house of the Lord was to be built, there stood beside him a priest of saintly bearing and striking beauty. His were the head and heart that originated the enterprise whose completion we rejoice in to-day; and because he was a man of renown, whose fame was diffused throughout the whole world, we rise up in this hundredth year from his birthday to praise him and make festive celebration of his honoured memory and glorious achievements.

Where the "Golden Vale" sweeps southward in smiling wealth of vegetation Tipperary gave Theobald Mathew to the world. Like the opening of the flowers in the glad freshness of the morning was the unfolding of his character in tender years. In look, in speech, in all his bearing,

the boy at his mother's knee gave promise of the man who was destined to exercise magic sway over millions of his fellows.

Once upon a time his mother, seated amid her young ones, was observed to have cloud overshadowing her countenance, and a tear standing in her eye. "Alas!" she sighed. "Nine sons has the Lord given to me, and not one of them to be a priest!" Young Theobald, with flushed face and kindling eye, raised his hands before her and said: "Mother, don't be uneasy; I shall be a priest."

On Easter morning in the year 1814 the happy mother saw him anointed with the unction of the priesthood, and ranked amongst the sons of St Francis in the Order of Minors Capuchin. In the city of Kilkenny he began his priestly mission. After a brief space the scene of his labours was changed to Cork. I have not read that your fathers went through the city gate to greet with waving palms the youthful priest;—little did they suspect the blessing that came to them in his person; but they tell us there is an angel who guards each village and town, and well assured may we feel that the bright spirit commissioned to watch over Cork must have thrilled with joy as he floated over your city on the day when Theobald Mathew came to labour for God in this capital of the south. For he was a man "of great power, endowed with wisdom, and showing forth the dignity of the prophets."

Rarely is there seen such a combination of all that enables one to impress his fellow-men. He was in the bloom of manhood; his form was graceful; his carriage dignified; in his face was statuesque perfection of outline, with the sweeter beauty that comes of winning expression. The gift of pleasing speech was his, and the modesty that lends a charm to all other gifts. Then there was the beauty from within. He had an all-embracing love which impelled him to desire the happiness of every man. His loving-kindness was enhanced by that ennobling qualification, a leaning towards the lowly and poor, and by that sign were men to recognise that he was indeed the disciple of the Gracious Lord Jesus Christ. And holy, in truth, was he; well practised in prayerful union with God. Think of such a

man, endowed with nature's most attractive gifts; these made more beautiful by supernatural grace, and all crowned with the hallowing glory of the priesthood! We wonder not that he became straightway the depositary of the people's confidence, and the object of their warm and reverent affection.

To the work of his sacred office he gave himself with whole-souled devotion. He preached, as preached His Divine Master, in humility, in meekness, in truthfulness of heart, with the love of God warming his every discourse, and imparting to it a beauty and power that brought all hearts into subjection. He sat each day for hours in the lowly confessional of his old Church, and unto him came all who laboured and were heavy-burdened, to find refreshing consolation. On those who were overshadowed by affliction his gentle ministrations cast the light of heavenly comfort; to hearts that were weary he imparted sustaining strength; the wayward he led back by a charm of look and voice which none could withstand; the perplexed he guided with sage counsel. The humble classes, who found him a father in the dearest sense of the name, loved him, and daily grew in warmth of love. The cultured portion of the community, valuing his beneficent labours, quickly learned to esteem him. The heart of Cork went out to the young priest, and all tongues spoke his praise. His popularity led to extensive availing of his kindly usefulness. This in turn increased with the people's material and moral needs. Mysteries of sorrow concealed from all others were revealed to him. Scarce was there a sad heart in this town whose griefs he knew not, or a supperless family whose condition was hidden from him. Of the bedridden victim of untoward accident or painful disease Father Mathew was sure to be informed. He saw within the walls of the House of Industry, which served the purpose of the Workhouse of the time, the congregation of the miserable. Poverty in its most painful aspect was there displayed; bodily infirmity of various kinds; mental trials likewise. The man of God noted the premature decay and death of men in youthful prime; he saw the emaciated face which told of hunger's gnawing;

heard the moans sent forth at the torture of fractured limb; there struck on his ear and pierced his heart the sighs and groans of the widow, the sobs of the fatherless child. He looked upon the ignoble, vacant features which told of the foolish sot; he witnessed the blush on the cheeks of not a few households on whom disgrace had come through the crime of some slave of passion.

Looking upon those varieties of human suffering, the clear judgment of the sympathetic priest soon learned to ascribe a large percentage of it to a common cause; the streams of sorrow he traced back in many an instance to a common source. Following their windings, he was guided to the baneful secret of a world of pain and sin. We know it, brethren, under its fitting name—the demon, Drink.

The demon, Drink! Demon, truly. What, brethren, is a demon? Is he not the spirit who is enemy of God? What is a demon? Is he not the enemy of man? What is a demon? The industrious worker of moral evil, the destroyer of souls, the potent influence that shuts out from men the sanctifying grace of the Most High. All this is sinful indulgence in strong drink—enemy of God, enemy of man, barrier against grace, nullifying for countless souls Christ's merciful redemption.

And this evil was in Ireland; dark spot where all around was fair; unlovely growth of thorns and briars amid wealth of encircling lilies! This the holy man perceived with sorrow and shame. He who fervidly loved her people saw that hospital ward, prison cell, lunatic asylum, brothel, grave—aye, and eternal Hell—were being peopled by this awful thing. He saw God offended; men brought to ruin; the country degraded. Through all classes had the loathsome disease spread. It employed the very good qualities of the people as aid to its extension. A demon in cunning, as in malice, it bewitched our race, so that when Irishman would show love for Irishman the message of good feeling was almost always borne on the stream of alcoholic liquor. Largely through this diplomacy of the Evil One was the destructive vice clung to by the infatuated people. No public opinion condemned it—condemned it, at least, with the emphasis that was befitting. No sense

of shame withheld the weak one in the hour of temptation. The drunkard maintained his place in Society, even the highest; the drunkard maintained his post in shop and factory; the drunkard was licensed to walk the same streets as the Christian, and join in the fellowship of civil intercourse. Dearest brethren, what do I say? Was it mere toleration that was shown the foul wretch? Was he not, rather, lauded as the *good fellow* who enhanced his other attractions, or compensated for them if he had them not, by the possession of a large heart and genial spirit?

Among the good men in this city who bemoaned the condition of things, and strove to work reform, there was one—a member of the Society of Friends—who, failing to satisfy his zeal by direct effort of his own, became the means, under Providence, of enlisting in the work of reformation the man who was to reap a harvest of success surpassing the most sanguine expectations. The honest Quaker noted the good priest who had tender compassion for the people's misery. He noted the unrivalled popularity of the humble friar, and measured the power it gave him for influencing public thought. He asked Father Mathew to fling himself into the much-needed enterprise—to undertake the task of striking effective blow at the fell power of drink. "Oh! Theobald Mathew," was his repeated cry, "if *thou* wouldst take the cause in hand!" And truly Theobald Mathew was one to take sling in hand and a stone from the brook and smite the nation's gigantic foe; for he was "beloved of God and men. He made him like the saints in glory. He sanctified him in his faith and meekness, and chose him out of all flesh, and He gave him a law of life and instruction, that he might teach Israel His judgments" (Ecclus. xlv.).

The holy man pondered. Long and serious were his reflections. The proposal wooed his heart, but he considered it well. He counted the cost; he weighed the difficulties; he calculated the resources at his command. He did more than ponder: he prayed. He had read that "unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Ps. cxxvi.). He sought guidance and strength from on high. It came. He rose from prayer resolved

to gird himself, and in the name of philanthropy—in the name of patriotism—in the name of God—to strike a blow for Ireland! On the 10th of April, 1838—blessed for ever be the day!—the small band of total abstainers who had been vainly endeavouring to impress the public mind, joyfully hailed the Capuchin priest as he took the chair at one of their meetings. An open book was placed before him, and on its virgin page he wrote, at the head of what he prayed would be a long list: "Rev. Theobald Mathew, Number I." They who had contended with the drink evil had been a handful; with his accession they grew to hundreds. They had been jeered at by the wicked and the thoughtless; when it was borne through the city on the breeze's wing that Father Mathew had joined them, the jeers were silenced; men held their breath in amaze; for the first time the community considered the theoretic and practical reasonableness of the derided "pledge." The small loft where he held his first meeting soon filled and overflowed. He transferred the place of assembling to the capacious "Horse Bazaar." There, central figure of eager groups, sat the leader of the new crusade; round him a band of men varying in rank, occupation, and mental acquirements, but one in zeal for the expansion of the movement. In earnest speech, now from the reverend chief, now from eloquent professional man, now from hardy son of toil, the gospel of temperance was preached. The hundreds swelled to thousands; the thousands multiplied apace. In three months the enrolments were twenty-five thousand! In five months they grew to one hundred and thirty-one thousand! The solemnity of Christmas in the year 1837 had been profaned by riot, bloodshed, misery, and sin that made joy for Satan. When the Christmas chimes of 1838 pealed from Shandon bells there was indeed "glory to God on high, and peace to men of good will," for by that sacred day the pledged abstainers in Cork and districts immediately surrounding were one hundred and fifty thousand!

The country was startled. From neighbouring counties people came to see the change; to see the man who caused it, and to join the new-formed league. As each group

returned to their homes they told the wonders they had seen. The narrative thrilled the hearers, and greater still became the thronging bands who came as pilgrims to what was regarded as the Mecca of the temperance movement. The nation at large would no longer consent that the shining light whom Providence had given should merely scatter beams from his adopted city. Invitations poured in from other counties and provinces; he was asked to visit them, to proclaim the converting truth and bring within the reach of all the blessed safeguard of the pledge.

In December, 1839, he went to Limerick. Were the City of the Violated Treaty ten times its size, it yet had failed to accommodate the thousands that blocked its spacious streets. Every village around, every town within a long radius, even the wilds of Connemara, poured their inhabitants into the historic city. As the object of universal interest went through the streets a sea of eager faces gazed upon him; at one moment there passed over the mass of humanity a hush of religious emotion; at another the enthusiasm of their admiration compelled their cheers, till lordly Shannon, like Tiber of old, must have trembled beneath her banks to hear the replication of their shouts made upon her concave shore. Four days the fervid Apostle laboured in preaching and receiving pledges; he then lay down in the house of his brother-in-law, overcome by fatigue of body, but the heart bounding with joy—he had added to the number of his disciples one hundred and fifty thousand!

To Waterford he next proceeded. The bishop who invited him hoped that if Father Mathew spent three or four days among them, from three to four thousand might be induced to enrol themselves under his standard. He spent less than three days in the city. Eighty thousand took the pledge!

In the following year the Metropolis welcomed him within her walls. The response made by Ireland's chief city to the call of the great Tribune proclaimed to the world that the country was aflame with vivid recognition of his beneficent work.

He now deemed it wise to proceed to the great seminary

of the nation's priesthood, St Patrick's College, Maynooth. The students received him with ovation such as Roman conqueror might have envied. He spoke to them in simple fashion, pictured the havoc which the enemy had made among the people, called on them to arise in the faith of a strong resolve, and form a band of warriors to guard the old country's honour. From his inflamed soul went the electric spark that enkindled his hearers. Two hundred and fifty of the young Levites knelt before him and pledged to him and to God their self-renunciation and their aid in the glorious work. Forth from the college portal he came, his face shining with light of victory, when, lo! without the enclosure thirty-five thousand people, congregated from the town and neighbourhood, presented themselves for enrolment!

He was now leader of an army of enthusiastic followers. In the opening summer of 1840 they numbered two millions. The country rang with his name. Men of learning joined the lowly peasantry in their admiration: Statesmen ruling the Empire, men of eminence in the domain of letters, travellers from foreign lands, all shades of religious belief—in short, the civilised world—regarded him with admiring wonder. At the council table of ministers, from the bench of justice, from the pulpit of every Christian Church, in the columns of the daily Press, at every fireside group—Theobald Mathew, his labours and triumph, were the theme of fervid praise. Over the heart of his own people he reigned, king of unquestioned power.

Beyond the shores of Ireland men desired to tender allegiance to the great moral ruler, and be blessed by the salutary restraint of the now famous pledge. After many earnest solicitations from across the Channel he went to Glasgow in the summer of 1842. There, as at home, his work was crowned with success. By tens of thousands were converts made. To his countrymen who dwelt in large number in that centre of industrial activity, his coming was as that of an angel of the Lord. Proud of his achievements and fame, they found it a joy to kneel before him, to feel the touch of his consecrated hand, to

hear the word of wisdom spoken by his musical voice, and then surrender themselves to his sacred influence. We have it attested by unprejudiced authority that by the change he affected among them the quarter wherein the Irish dwelt was thenceforth the most peaceful in the city.

To England he went in the following summer. A grand procession marched before him under the shadow of York's noble minster. Leed's busy streets resounded to the applause of a multitude gathered to see him. London, the mighty Babylon, opened her gates to welcome him. Everywhere overwhelming crowds hung with reverence on his words. For many hours even ladies and the infirm stood patient in the public ways in the hope of being rewarded by a look at the man of whom they had heard such wonders. Everywhere he left record of his visit by a vast increase of abstainers, and, in addition, by a general uplifting impression produced by his striking tone and bearing. In London he began his work among the poor. He brought to their homes the spirit of temperance, and with temperance, comfort and peace. He next went, oft-invited and honoured guest, to the *salons* of the great. There the favourable estimate which preceded him was strengthened when there fell on baron and knight and ladies of high degree the spell that was in that noble form, in the voice of gentle gravity, the carriage of exquisite grace, the combination of genial dignity and priestly sanctity found in his favoured person. Influencing rich and poor, simple and great, Protestant and Catholic, he added to his ever-swelling list by the English campaign six hundred thousand.

He came back to his loved and loving country. He came back, not to repose: he desired it not; he knew it not. Here, there, everywhere, the grand work went on.

Let us make effort, brethren, to conceive the labour, mental and physical, demanded from the man who did what I have cursorily described, and much more whereon I have not touched.

Take him in his home in this city, and let us glance at his ordinary programme. He rose at early morning:

having communed with God in fervent prayer, and performed the divine mysteries at the altar, he commenced his day's work for the saving of the people. His simple dwelling had ceased to be a private home when its master had fully launched his philanthropic enterprise. Each day crowds flocked thither seeking admission among his disciples. There was needed from the good father a word for each, a learning something of each one's history, and then some words of counsel. As the early comers slowly moved away through the dense throng on came the stream of eager ones, each of whom, as his turn came to kneel at the Apostle's feet, met with benign smile, kindly word and loving interest. While attending to those who came willingly his keen eye watched the wretched creatures whom relatives or friends were striving to lead to him. Hungering and thirsting for the good of all, he feared to lose even one. Hence did he seem to multiply himself, here receiving the willing recruits, there gently compelling the reluctant; now encouraging the timid, now comforting the sorrow-stricken; on all sides administering the pledge, and this during many successive hours. Then there was the wide-extended and complex organisation, of which he was the guiding and animating soul. Scarce a parish in Ireland but had its Temperance Society, and to all he had to send oft-looked-for messages of instruction, warning or encouragement. Side by side with the work of the temperance movement were his strictly professional duties. In the height of the sensation he was ever the priest. In the arduous work of the confessional he daily strove with patient zeal to lead erring souls to God. Being the man we have seen, winsome by the charm of his holy meekness, his work in the sacred tribunal was beyond the common measure. And it was gone through for years in the poor old Church in Blackamoor Lane with scant supply of cheering light and pure air to make the work less wearisome. They who watched his life—and all men of his day watched it with vivid interest—marvelling at his reform of the morals of the people, found greater marvel in the stupendous labours he underwent. It was a *spend-*

ing of himself for God and God's people. He gave his time, he gave his bodily strength, he gave his mental energy, he gave the money at his command. One thing only he reserved: wise solicitude for his own soul's welfare. In the spirit of a true Apostle, he had resolved that he should not, preaching to others, become himself a castaway. In that concern of transcendent import he sought his own gain; in naught besides. He sought no rest; shirked no toil. The labour of ten men he alone accomplished. We can only explain to our wondering minds his heroic endurance and giant capacity by reflecting that when the Divine Spirit forms an Apostolic soul, there is effected a transfiguring of the weakness and littleness of mortal man into a preternatural greatness and power which can work prodigies. Truly can the servants of God do all things in Him Who strengthens them.

Now did it please Heaven to try our motherland by dire visitation, the memory of which, even at this distance of time, shakes the stoutest heart. "Black '47" slew by death of starvation and famine-plague two millions of her children, and of the remnant sent tens of thousands terror-stricken over the sea. The nation's joy was crushed out. It was some tempering of the rude storm that Theobald Mathew was there to do all that saintly hero could do to render its ravages more endurable. From the opening of his ministry he had been an angel of blessedness; now "deep called upon deep"—the greatness of the people's need brought forth resources of self-sacrificing charity before unknown; both the will and the power of doing good seemed to deepen and widen and strengthen within him with the spread and intensification of the public affliction. With all the strength of his bodily frame; with all the wisdom of his sound judgment; with all the robust holiness of his soul—he flung himself into the work of rescuing as many as he might from the dread calamity. Ah! brethren, I shall not tell—I cannot tell—the tale of his heroism in that dark hour of his country's woe. Nor is there need to tell—it is written in the Book of Life!

The dire visitation passed, the land was changed. The people were in their graves, or in a foreign land, or pros-

trate in gloom at home. The temperance organisation was inevitably disarranged. The subordinate leaders were in many an instance dead or gone. The joyous strains of the bands that were wont to cheer the members of the local societies were hushed. Wild grief had driven many to forget their plighted troth; the pledge was extensively violated. And the great chief?—He had advanced in years. His spirit, overshadowed by saddening sympathy with his stricken country, failed to supply sustainment to his physical energies. Not that he lay down and became inactive. The great soul would ever and anon rouse its drooping forces. Indeed, it was now he gave, perhaps, most striking evidence of devotion to the cherished purpose of his life.

In 1849, despite the adverse pleading of anxious friends, and the stern prohibition of medical advisers, he sailed for America, to win a new world to the cause he loved. The great Republic received him with more than royal welcome. Receptions, addresses, banquets, processions, illuminated cities gave expression to the public veneration and love for the renowned philanthropist. Congress and Senate admitted him to a seat on the floor of their houses, thereby ranking him amongst the world's greatest men. But honours were unprized by him; he had crossed the sea to work, and work he did in America. The old spirit that fired him in the halcyon days of the struggle at home seemed at times rekindled. Against advancing weakness he laboured. One day abed, subject of anxious medical treatment, he was to be seen next day in some public hall, surrounded by an overwhelming throng, and busily occupied for long reach of time. No dread of fatigue, no pain of limb, already visited by the warning of paralysis, could restrain his noble zeal. He went from city to city; made long journeys by road and river; preached often; lectured in spacious halls; pledged a lengthened train of people; attended to piles of important correspondence—this in his sixtieth year, with labour of a lifetime behind all to discount his bodily and mental vigour. Glowing with God's love, and upheld by Power Divine, the holy man dared it all! A

second stroke of the dread paralysis came as he sailed on the Mississippi River. When temporary relief had been given he resumed his labour, and persevered therein until he had made nigh three quarters of a million proselytes in the United States!

This grand success achieved, he returned to his native land at the close of the year 1851. It was thenceforth alternation of conditions of grave weakness and slight rallying; with each rallying the insatiable desire of doing good displayed itself. After four years of health vicissitudes, with changing of clime in search of relief, he settled down at the residence of his brother within a short distance of Cork. Feebleness advanced upon him. His step became heavy and tottering. Even then the repentant victims of drink went out from the town to seek salvation through him, and as long as it was absolutely in his power he would limp forward to meet the poor drunkard with fatherly love and compassion.

Those were the days when, as bodily vigour failed, the graces of the spirit shone their brightest. Then was he most markedly seen to be the embodiment of the Christian Gospel. Humble, like his seraphic father, St Francis, with no sense of the merits that had won him world-wide fame; patient under the heavy pressure of disease; sweetly gentle, the face that could ill conceal the testimony of suffering ceased not to shed on all around the sunbeam of gracious kindliness. Prayerful and holy, while they sat beside him the members of the household could observe that he was almost continually communing with God, and when words were softly addressed to them they were coloured with deep devotion. For a last change they brought him to the mild air of Queenstown. Slowly and feebly, with a friend to lean on, he moved along its sunlit promenade, and all who passed by the way stood and gazed with tearful emotion on what was now but the wreck of the once handsome form. The final stroke came: he lay down to die. The power of speech was lost, but oh! sublime illustration of the ruling passion strong in death! Three thousand miles away a physician had ordered him to take absolute repose. "*Never!*" he re-

plied. "But your life is at stake," said the medical man. "If I am to die, I shall die in harness!" was the noble answer. Now, whilst his soul struggled to be free, men were kneeling at his bedside, and since his voice could utter no more they recited the familiar formula of the pledge; then the poor palsied hand, soon to be rigid in death, made effort to sign the hallowed Cross on their foreheads. Angels hovered round his couch waiting to bear him to eternal rest. He delayed them a space that he might give last touch of gilding to his crown. And so, blessing man, and blessed by God, he gave forth his spirit. That which died—his mortal body—awaits in yonder cemetery the angel's trumpet call: his soul is in Abraham's bosom.

Assembled for centennial celebration of his auspicious birth it is opportune for us to inquire—what place in the ranks of Ireland's sons does Father Mathew justly claim? If there be any here who hesitate for reply they will be helped to accurate judgment by hearing the opinion expressed by a distinguished contemporary of his. Dr Channing, the famous American Unitarian preacher, uttered this testimony to the merits of the Irish friar and his work: "History records no revolution like this. Father Mathew, the leader of this moral revolution, ranks far above the heroes and statesmen of the times." Full statement of the position he merits in our estimation let one utter. After our canonised saints, Father Mathew is Ireland's greatest glory. Who has surpassed him? Who equals him? Glance back on our country's chequered history; read every volume which tells of great achievements; listen to every soulful bard who has sung of majestic monarch, of learned sage, of eloquent tribune, of warrior bold. Study the lives of all who have loved Ireland from Brian the Brave to the immortal Liberator. What have they sought for her? Have they worked, lived, or died to win her political independence? If so, excellent service was theirs; yet trivial. For to all who are mindful of the coming consummation of this world's interests, and who give grave thought to man's eternal destiny, of small account are political freedom and richest blessings of time.

To the people of God weeping by the rivers of Babylon faith and the Divine friendship were better than loftiest reach of their high state and prosperity. Liberty is precious; prize it, brethren, beyond all things, but be that understood of the liberty of the children of God. Besides, estimating political emancipation at its true worth, this hold for certainty—no man, no band of men, has ever approached to its attainment; no men shall ever attain it—unless largely aided by the self-denial which Theobald Mathew taught.

To all who read, history tells facts; to the wise it is help for the formation of principles, and suggests the policy that should guide human undertakings. Mark therefore, brethren: twice within the memory of living men has a constitutional effort been made to right our country's wrongs. The Repeal agitation commenced in 1840. He whose memory we honour to-day had begun the war on drink in 1838. Thus O'Connell, entering on his great struggle, found the country already swept of drunken excess by the hand of the temperance reformer. The power of national enthusiasm which the political leader grasped to hurl against the citadel of oppression was the spirit of a temperate people. Had it been otherwise, had the moral reformer not preceded the claimant of civil rights—the monster meetings of '43, whose thundering roar shook the misruling power, would never have assumed their impressive dignity and force; the executive would have found easy pretext for scattering them in a storm of blood had they who composed them been the drink-loving people whom Father Mathew had reformed. Note, brethren, another suggestive coincidence. In the year 1878, Sunday closing for Ireland was enacted. In 1879, the very next year, our down-trodden agricultural population awoke from sleep, sprang to their feet, and from lips that had long been silent poured out bold demand for justice. Sunday after Sunday they trooped from hill and dale, colours streaming and bands playing, to listen to words of encouragement and guidance from trusted leaders. The movement became a power to which the Government of England gave the recognition of watch-

ful hate and many attempts by legal chicanery and brute force to break it down. That movement is reasonably regarded as having created the dawn of Ireland's day; but solid ground is there for the conviction that the movement would have been killed at its birth, and the Sunday meetings suppressed at the outset by strong and unscrupulous hand, had not Providence, on the eve of their inauguration, closed the drinking-houses, and thereby enabled the people to assemble in their thousands without the folly of drunken excess to present them as easy prey to the enemy.

Are there amongst us some whose national aspirations are tuned to higher key—whose programme for national regeneration would be of bolder sort than that we follow to-day? For such men also there is proof of our dependence for the smaller good of political freedom on the greater blessing of national sobriety. When Theobald Mathew was yet under the overshadowing providence of a tender mother's care, when he was a child of eight, there was sent into the peaceful county of Wexford a military corps enlisted from the most rabid section of the Orange population. Its members hated with furious hate the children of the true Church; they hated with scarce less fury every just Protestant who dared to sympathise with Catholics in their cruel oppression. With the rage of demons they flung themselves on the unoffending people. Rifle, sword, torturing pitch-cap and flaming fire were plied as though the Government which paid them had plotted, first the supreme agony, and then the annihilation of our race. After the reign of terror had been borne for some months, a body of the peasantry was once adoring the Most High in their humble parish church when the soldiers came and set the house of the Lord on fire! The persecuted people clustered round their priest, and the sermon he preached to them that morning was this: it was better to die like men than be butchered as dogs, and he would lead if they would follow. Grasping in hand the Holy Cross that bore the figure of our Lord Jesus Christ, he led forth his flock to defend their homes, their lives, and their honour. Quickly the spark of hope flew round; the historic rebellion was inaugurated. Our countrymen fought the foe in the

stormy fight of Ross. When the disciplined troops were sent flying from the town, they who fought for Ireland would avail of the respite from actual conflict to refresh their wearied frames. Then was evidenced the fell fascination that has long bewitched our people. It is first principle in Irish hygiene that refreshing strength for human body cannot be had save through intoxicating liquor. The victors of the hour drank; the routed soldiery returned—and won the day! You know the stirring ballad which tells the tale and suggests the moral:

> "We bravely fought and conquered,
> At Ross and Wexford town;
> And if we failed to keep them,
> 'Twas drink that brought us down."

Oh! to think what might have been! What strained contentions—what shocking murders—of a subsequent generation—would have been prevented! What protracted anxieties and painful phases in the struggle of to-day would have been forestalled! With how much more peace, as well as dignity, would the problem of Irish and English inter-relations have been solved! What might have been if the men of Wexford, their green flag floating o'er them, had marched to west and north; if, with swelling numbers and ripening discipline, with native physical energy, with the moral dignity and tenacious purpose which temperance would have given, with the coward brutes, brave only while the people lay down to be crushed, flying in recreant terror before them; if they had swept into the sea the last battalions of the proud invader, and displayed before the world's eyes the sunburst of Irish freedom! They failed to do it, and—"'twas drink that brought them down"!

Therefore is there ground for the belief that Ireland's temporal weal demands the sobriety of her sons; and for this must it be confessed that he who, in the unction of his priestly grace, and moved by love for his kind, rose up to teach her people Christian self-restraint, made largest contribution to Ireland's national greatness. Yet more needful blessings, gifts of nobler sort, he bestowed upon her. Take in at glance of the mind each town and hamlet from

Antrim's rock-bound coast to Carbery's hundred isles. Count the poor whom he found in them as he traversed the land, and on whom he bestowed the comforts of life by leading them to the abandonment of drink. Yes, he gave food to those who had felt the pangs of hunger; becoming clothing he substituted for squalid rags; taste of Heaven's delicious air he gave, and school training besides, to children who, in the day of the parents' drunkenness, were corporally, mentally, and spiritually starved. The cheerless hovel he changed into well-lighted home. Filth and thriftlessness gave place to cleanliness and refining industry. On sorrowing hearts the great priest poured Gilead's balm when, by the power of his Heavenly mission, he exorcised the baneful spirit. Men soiled by lust—but only when inflamed with drink—he made chaste because temperate. To blasphemous brawler, who made night horrid by shocking speech, he taught Christian reverence through the glorious pledge. Angry dissension, fierce riot, red-handed murder ceased, as far as human frailty permitted, when the accursed thing which generated those evils was driven from myriad homes at the voice of the man of God. Be it spoken, my Lords and brethren, in one word, and be our high feasting at the holy altar to-day dutiful recognition of the Divine Bounty whence it has come: Theobald Mathew gave to the Irish race, as far as the brave striving of one man could give them, the two things most worthy the ambition of all peoples—honour before the civilised world and Heaven's precious grace.

WHERE IS THY GOD?

PREACHED ON OCCASION OF THE BLESSING OF THE DOMINICAN CHURCH, GALWAY, *25th October*, 1891.

"My enemies have reproached me, whilst they say to me day by day: Where is thy God?" (Psalm xli. 11).

My Lord Bishop, Very Rev. Fathers, and dearest brethren—When we were taught in childhood God's existence and sovereign dominion our youthful minds were led to speculate on many things connected with the Supreme Being. There suggested itself, amongst others, the inquiry which King David tells us his enemies addressed to him: "Where is thy God?" The catechism gave the answer: "God is everywhere." Everywhere He needs must be. His power has created all things, and ever maintains them; wheresoever His power is exercised there is He, for He is one thing with all His attributes. Over the wide earth; down in the mysterious deeps of the sea; through the vast extent of air; over the expanse of sky; in all the glistening stars; within the bosom of the sun, does God dwell. Let mind pass beyond all that eye beholds; beyond the most distant searching of astronomer's lense; beyond the immense spheres in which scientific intelligences labour; be the millions of mighty worlds as numerous as they may—through all extends God's universal royalty, and in them all He holds His dwelling.

But a distinct localisation of Himself, if the term be permitted, the Almighty effected when He made angels to share His glory and bliss. He is everywhere, but, the catechism adds, He is said chiefly to be in Heaven, where He shows Himself to the blessed. To St John the Evangelist was the dwelling-place of the Almighty revealed, and He has described it. A throne was there set, which an

emerald rainbow compassed round, and from the throne came voices and lightnings and thunders. Four-and-twenty ancients, with crowns of gold, adoring stood, and outspread before the throne was a sea of crystal. The beauteous place had a wall, great and high, and the building of the wall was of jasper stone; but the city itself was of pure gold, and its foundations adorned with all manner of precious stones. As the wall of jasper went round the city, twelve times was its line of beauty broken to give place to twelve gates of brilliant pearl. Sun and moon that city had none, for the glory of the Lord enlightened it. And adoring spirits were there, who rested not by day or night, but gave "glory and honour and benediction to Him Who sat upon the throne, Who liveth for ever and ever."

Time came when God made man. And with man would His gracious love have Him to dwell. He planted a Paradise of pleasure, and there placed Adam. The tree of life He set in the midst, and all around scattered teeming wealth and beauty to serve the needs and delight the heart of man. As the first happy pair walked its glades they had on every side vouchers of the loving bounty of the Most High. Their feet trod the soft sward; their eyes beheld, now trees rearing themselves with giant splendour high in air; now sparkling flowers in wondrous variety of form and hue; now the diverse animals who roamed hill and dale; now the smooth-flowing river that watered Paradise, and with rapturous awe must they have been thrilled as they uplifted their gaze to the resplendent orb which shed on all the fair scene its glorious light. But chief adornment and chief joy of Paradise was this: God was there. The touch of His creative hand was fresh upon our first parents, and from the power of their faith and the fullness of their grace they felt Him in all things. To their refined sensitiveness He was in the rustling of the leaves, in the rippling of the brooks, in the sighing breeze, in the melody of the birds, in the admirable action of the forces of vegetable life around them; the sun's light was as the beam of His ethereal smile, and so the blissful sense was ever with them that the Lord, great and good, was there. And when God spoke to them, the music of His

voice filling their souls was enhancement of their gladsome peace. Sin came: the Lord went back to His angels: man was driven forth into sorrowing exile: the joyous scene was no more.

Two thousand years and more went by, and with the sons of men God dwelt not in love. The age of Moses came. As though weary of the estrangement from men to which sin had compelled Him, God decreed to come and dwell once more among them. Having summoned Moses to the summit of a mountain in the desert of Sinai, He said to him: "Speak to the children of Israel. And they shall make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in the midst of them." He then revealed the design and prescribed the making of the Tabernacle. It was a tent of beautiful wood, overlaid with gold and covered with hangings of richest texture. Within were two sections; one the Holy of holies, wherein was placed the Ark of the Covenant. On the golden lid of the Ark was the mercy-seat, where, between the wings of spreading cherubim, God elected in mystic manner to dwell. "There," He said, "I will speak to thee from the midst of the cherubim which shall be upon the altar."

From Moses' day five hundred years went by, and the wisest of men was king of Judea. When Solomon reigned in peace and wealth and unrivalled splendour, he recalled a project of his father, David, who yearned to find "a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of Jacob." He summoned one hundred and eighty thousand men to work out his noble scheme. Costly stones were gathered and cut into shapely form; from the forest of Libanus were brought beautiful cedars, and after vast expenditure of money and toil there rose up on Mount Moriah the gorgeous Temple which was the glory of Jerusalem and the wonder of the world. Within the Temple, as in the Tabernacle, was the Holy of holies, wherein were placed, one to right hand, and one to left, colossal cherubim of olive wood, overlaid with gold. Standing erect they spread their shining wings, beneath which, on the festive day of the Temple's dedication, the Ark of the Covenant was laid. Levites and singing men played on their cymbals

and harps; one hundred and twenty priests sounded their trumpets; the choir sang: "Give glory to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever"; the Temple was filled with a cloud, and the glory of God came down upon the place. Then did the king remind the people that the Lord had promised He would dwell in a cloud, and they blest the Most High in jubilant thanksgiving for that He had come in love to abide among them. He had promised to hear the supplications of all who would invoke Him in that hallowed spot, and for this was it regarded as the dwelling-place of the Lord.

But Jewish rites, types of things to come, passed away. The mystic abiding of the Lord under the cherubim's wings ceased. Solomon's glorious Temple was itself destroyed. What the prophets had called "the fullness of time" came, bringing fullness of God's gracious love; the day of blessedness, when, not in figure, nor in cloud, nor in mystic signification, but in the reality of love, Eternal God came down amongst men. The Word by Whom all things were made was Himself made flesh, and dwelt amongst us. A lowly virgin walked the hill-sides of Judea, entered the house of Elizabeth on visit of affectionate courtesy, when lo! she to whom the visit was made rose in reverent salutation of the maiden, for she was taught of God that within that maiden's womb the monarch of Heaven had taken up His abode!

Forth from the virginal womb He came, and dwelt in rugged stable. No shafts of setim wood, nor coverings of gold, nor drapery of rich-woven silks were there, as had been round the Holy of holies, for it was now the time of His expiatory mission. From Bethlehem to Nazareth went He, and the humble house that now rests on the Adriatic shore became His home. Thence He went forth to preach, and, though the foxes and the birds of the air had their dwellings, He had not whereon to lay His head till the hour when He laid it, thorn-crowned and bleeding, on the hard cross, and died for our redemption.

But the love that brought Him down to live with men, and prompted Him to die for men, is a love that endures for ever. Greater love no *man* hath than that he should

die for his friends, and after proof of love he cannot show. He Who was God and man died for His friends, and after death gave Himself to us, living for ever, in the mystery of ineffable sweetness, the adorable Sacrament of the altar. His last dwelling-place on earth, where He will abide till time shall be no more, is the Eucharistic Tabernacle. There, not mystically, but in very truth, in real presence, His Eternal Divinity, His humanity, Incarnate God, Creator, Redeemer and Judge of the world, is enthroned in love—Heaven's own God, Overpowering Majesty, awful Sanctity, Sovereign Beauty, Infinite Perfection—really, truly and substantially in the small space of the Sacramental species! That which is fairest and grandest in Heaven; the Monarch of Heaven; He Who is Himself Heaven's glory and bliss—dwells in the most blessed Eucharist as in the shrine, distinctively, of His love. Not majesty, nor wisdom, nor power does He there display; or if wisdom and power these only as the ministers of His love; wisdom designing, and power executing, that which love commands. Love traversing the realms of space, and, one may think, gathering from wide creation the vastness of His immensity, by the word of transubstantiating power has brought Him to dwell beneath the semblance of a fragment of bread. All else on earth is creature, with the lowliness of the creature, brought forth from nothing; the Eucharist is God! To angels casting downward gaze on earth all else, though never so great and beautiful, must seem unworthy their interest and regard; the Eucharist, to their adoring contemplation, is gem of Divine beauty set in the world's midst.

What are men wont to do, brethren, with costly gem? Do they not make casket, strong and fair to look upon, and carefully place the gem therein? Therefore does sense of faith speak to the Christian heart the law of reverent love bidding us make for our Eucharistic treasure a casket—a Temple; enshrine therein the celestial gift, and name that hallowed place the House of God. And oh! what favoured region has marbles precious enough? what glade in Lebanon has cedars fair enough? what sparkling mine has gold pure enough? what skilled hand of genius has art so

high as shall be worthy to build a Temple wherein we may not tremble to enshrine our God? The strongest faith on earth and the world's proudest wealth raised up Solomon's noble pile to hold His mystic presence: the Holy Spirit Himself prepared the virginal womb that was to encompass Him. Shall any less than the same Divine Spirit guide the artist's mind that designs the Christian Church? Be its proportions faultlessly just; in beauteous strength let its columns rise, and let them stand in serried rank as sentinels that guard the palace of the king. Be each capital enriched with floral grace, and let the entering sunlight take form from luxuriant rose, or shapely lancet-window. Let the overshadowing roof, well wrought, be as the cherubim's wings of old to shelter the holy place. As from the portal we tread the long-drawn aisle, let all—above, beneath, around—give assurance to soul and sense that it is, indeed, the House of God and the place where His glory dwells.

Lo! here we are to render our first worshipful service in this new Temple of the Eucharistic Lord. The ceremonial of the Mass has begun, and before entering on its most solemn mysteries we pause to adjust our hearts that with faith and salutary reverence we may welcome the Heavenly Visitor Who is about to take up His dwelling here. Ere the hour that now is shall have gone the celebrating priest will incline his head towards that altar-table, and at his utterance of Christ's omnipotent word the bread and wine which now lie there shall be changed into the body and blood of God made man. Then shall we bow down, not because royal prince of earth is here, but in worship of the Son of God, as truly enthroned here as in His Palace of Heaven. And He shall come down to stay with us for ever. As long as His ministers consecrate the sacramental species He shall abide here. He shall be here in the cheerful daytime; here no less truly in soundless midnight, when the Church is closed and we are buried in sleep. He shall be here when the faithful throng the nave, and round the altar swinging censer gives out its sweet aroma, and the priests encircle His sacramental throne, and the choir

pours out the chorus of jubilant praise; but here, also, at tranquil eve when shadows fall athwart the holy place, and the Church is lone, with a solitary one from among the poor praying to Him from some shady nook. He shall be here to receive the homage of the saints and the great ones of earth; here, likewise, to welcome the lowly and the sinful. He shall abide here, not as judge, to scrutinise offences and condemn, but as father, to pity and to bless. If from this Holy of holies the Sacred Heart would speak its attitude and purpose it would say: "Come to Me"; not that alone, but: "Come ye all to Me!" And if from the universal mass there be any for whom His gracious benediction is specially ready, it is they on whom some cloud has fallen, who have sunk into some form of misery, for His comforting word in the gospel, and it is from the Tabernacle we can best fancy Him uttering it, is: "Come to Me, all you who labour and are burdened!"

Ah, brethren! well may we cry out in presence of His Majesty here concealed, as did the Apostle before His revealed splendour on Thabor, "Lord—it is good for us to be here!"—Good for the tempted to seek here courageous strength for vanquishing the Evil One. Good for the sinner to come hither and fall down before Thee, as did Magdalene long ago, and weep and sigh and beat his breast and hopefully crave Thy pardon; then go down to his house justified. Good for troubled hearts to come and tell their tale of sorrow into Thy ear. Oh! Divine Comforter of souls, good is it for the lonely woman whose staff of life has gone, to entreat here the sustainment of Thy providence; good for anxious Christian parent, whose wayward child treads the path of danger, to make complaint of the erring one, and pray for the erring one here; good for all on whom ill-fortune in any of its various forms has inflicted wound to seek healing in the Gilead's balm which flows from this fount of blessing. Here is the eye that reads the hearts of men; the power at whose bidding Lazarus walked forth from the corruption of the tomb into the vigour and beauty of renewed life is here; the gracious benignity that smiled on little children and laid omnipotent hands in love on their innocent heads is here; here the compassionate

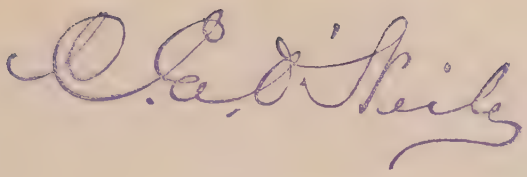
heart which pardoned the thief in the very hour when he was dying for his crimes.

Hence 'twas before the Divine heart here enthroned sainted servants of God were wont to pass the long watches of the night, and feel it sweetest entertainment. They whose aspirations were ever heavenward felt that whilst the hour tarried which was to usher them into eternal bliss the dearest comfort of their earthly sojourn was the Eucharistic Presence. Of my own great father in God, the glorious patriarch, St Dominick, they have recorded that when the evening song of praise was over, and the friars went from before the altar to take their night's repose, he stayed behind, and in the Church ever spent his nights. In the Tabernacle was his interest centred; from the Tabernacle issued the joy of life for him, because in the Tabernacle was his loved and loving Lord: therefore, in presence of the Tabernacle he found rest.

Brethren, whilst we rejoice for the treasure we here possess let it be, as in religious gladness on earth it ever must be, with mingling of holy fear. Let reverence most profound fill mind and heart. Let ours be the feeling of the patriarch, who, trembling, exclaimed: "How terrible is this place! This is no other but the House of God, and the gate of Heaven." And since we dare to enter hither, and since there are times when our coming to the Lord's House is bounden religious exercise, salutary question will be that of the Psalmist: "Who shall stand in His holy place?" salutary our noting the reply: "The innocent in hands and clean of heart." Where He sits enthroned in His eternal kingdom no least defilement is permitted to appear before Him. If when we go from life shadow of venial fault be on us, cleansing fires must make us spotless before we can find admittance into His presence. Here He allows us to come and stay even though we be sinners; but it behoves us to judge ourselves. "I will stand before Thee," said holy David, "and I will see; for Thou art not a God that willest iniquity; neither shall the wicked dwell near Thee, nor shall the unjust abide before Thy eyes." Let us reverence His sanctuary; by bended knee; yes, and bowed head, and silent tongue, and all solemn

attitude; but chiefly by bringing before Him innocent hearts on which His most plenteous benediction may fall.

Finally, brethren, be it remembered that the Divine Master Who dwells for our love desires that you should make this sacred Temple fully and irrevocably His own. When they tell me that a Church is incumbered by debt I regard that Church as not belonging fully to our Divine Lord. Some creature owns it in part. Perfect the work you have begun by making this fair edifice all God's own. He who shall help to pay the Gracious Redeemer's debt—may the Gracious Redeemer forgive that man's debt! He who shall have done a part in providing for the Lord this earthly dwelling—that man may the Lord receive into the peace and joy of His everlasting dwelling!



DANIEL O'CONNELL.

Panegyric Delivered on Occasion of the Religious Celebration held in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, 12*th May*, 1897, at the Instance of His Holiness Leo XIII., to Commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Death of the Irish Tribune.

The Lord said to Moses—"I have seen the affliction of my people, and have heard their cry. And knowing their sorrow, I am come to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians. . . . And I will send thee to Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth My people out of Egypt."—Exod. iii.

May it please your Eminence—Very Rev. Fathers, and dearest faithful in Christ:—It is rare amongst us for the sober wisdom of high ecclesiastical authority to ordain that the praise of one whose life was acted in the midst of the world's busy concerns should be spoken in the holy place. It is signal honour, accorded only to signal merit. None of right mind and feeling will question the claim to honourable commemoration of him whose life and achievements are the occasion of our assembling here to-day. If I but tell uncoloured tale of him, I shall seem to utter hyperbole and set before you rather ideal—which no man has ever attained—than narration of actual history; and of a truth as I gaze upon the figure of him in the form and light which history has delivered unto us, and contemplate the work he wrought, I suppress incredulous wonder only by recurrence to a distinctive call of the Most High God and distinctive aids from Heaven's bounty as explanation of his phenomenal life and deeds.

No wonder that kindly Providence in O'Connell's youthful days, issuing outside of its normal procedure, selected from the great mass one to bear upon him the charge of a Heaven-designed mission. No wonder the gracious Lord

should have then looked down upon this mother-land of ours and "seen the affliction of His people, and heard their cry and pitied their sorrow." For, truly, they were "dark and evil days." The sorrow of them, brethren, I may not tell you. It were great feat for human tongue to describe the affliction of God's people in this land at close of the eighteenth century. The weeping prophet of Israel would have asked of Ireland then: "To whom shall I compare thee, or to whom shall I liken thee, O virgin daughter of Sion? Great as the sea is thy destruction" (Lament. i.). For, verily, "her gates were broken down; her priests sighed; her virgins were in affliction. Her adversaries had become her lords; the enemy had put his hand to all her desirable things, and from the daughter of Sion all her beauty was departed" (Lament. i.).

Our island home, first by the brightness of her faith and fervid sanctity of her early Christian days, then by her supernatural courage in combat with heretical spirits, had won her claim to be recognised as the *people of God*. Wherefore her enemies and God's enemies—her enemy being God's enemy—directed against her the full battery of impious hostile power. Impoverishment and degradation they proposed to inflict upon her. Body, mind, and soul did the persecutor attack! Legislative enactments were passed to impede the physical weal of the Catholic Irishman. The acquiring, the enjoying, the disposing of property was made impossible to him; and the crime of this legislation assumed the character of unnatural crime by the provision that if there were young man base enough to desire the despoiling of his own father, and renegade enough to reject, or profess to reject, his Christian belief, his very sin gave him the right to oust his parent and make the paternal possession his own. Education of Catholic Irishmen was made a crime. The schoolmaster and the tutor were registered as criminals. Their teaching, refining, elevating work was declared to be violation of the law, and money was paid to any man who should convict them. The ancient land of light—the educational lamp of Europe, the storied shrine of learning, whereunto spirits with lofty ambition from all the nations were wont to come that they

might elevate and grace themselves by carrying off share of the luminous splendour of our emerald isle—she was to be degraded, barbarised, if vile purpose and rude power of persecution could barbarise her. Impious heresy knew that zealous esteem of learning was one of the characteristic glories of the Church; therefore would heresy strike the Church a strong blow by forbidding her enlightening her children. Our country, that had been opulent and noble, was to be brought down to want and ignominy; her sons and daughters, who erstwhile, with heads erect in proud bearing, with ample store of wealth, had dispensed noble philanthropy to other peoples, were to be reduced to threadbare garments, emaciated features, drooping impotence. King William the Hollander would permit the Catholic to be, merely that as a serf he might till his natal soil for Protestant taskmasters. Queen Anne would apply with more precision the enactments of them that went before her, so that even if humane spirit in some Protestant should seek to enable Catholics to evade the law, it might not be. Fraud, violence, and oaths of abjuration, enforced by pains and penalties—nefarious means, unknown to civilised races—were employed to help the impious purpose of Ireland's enemies. When George the First was king, yet further was the evil system perfected. Under George II. the Catholic freeholder was deprived of right to vote. Nay, so did the hate of our country and her creed wax strong that one who had forsworn his religion under the pressure of persecution, if he were not particularly zealous in profession of the new creed and in harassing the true believers, was subjected to legal penalties.

In 1740 there came the cloud of desolating famine, one of the most dire that man's memory had recorded; four hundred thousand people were carried off by it. Easy it was for the old land to drift into famine. She was drained to supply luxurious living to absentees; embargo was laid on her provisions; the people who had been long wont to draw from the island's bounteous bosom the milk of plenteous resource wherewith Heaven had endowed her, were shut out from the industrious administration of the land; the despoilers of the Cromwellian troopers' stamp were not the

men to cultivate the soil successfully: these causes, added to the action of William's laws for discouragement of Ireland's woollen trade, had beggared the nation, and her loud wail under the dark visitation of the famine gave testimony to the success with which part, at least, of the tyrant's aim was being realised. Part, I have said, of the tyrant's aim, for since "not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that cometh from the mouth of God"—not bread alone, not material goods alone, not mere honour and aggrandisement of earth and time, would her enemy wrest from Ireland. Robbery of her wealth, extinction of her educational light, were but assaults on the outposts; the heart of the citadel, the point of supreme interest whereon the dark schemes of her enemy were focused, was the treasure of her Christian faith. Our fathers were insulted and despoiled because they believed in the true God and in Jesus Christ Whom He had sent. Be not deceived, brethren, by him who says that it was conquest of us as a nation the ruthless foe desired. Persecution which defies description—and Catholic Ireland's persecution defies description—has not been seen in human history where mere human feeling, political or social hostility, was its inspiration. Had it been in truth His seeking to make Himself King, or refusing to pay tribute to Cæsar, that drove them to torment the Divine Master, their hate would have been sated ere Calvary was reached. For there is a stage of torture where the humanity which is common to the victim and his oppressor asserts itself, and blackest hate is forced to stay the arm that smote, and even pity the torn, prostrate, and bleeding victim. It is only when in some persecuting venture Satan allies himself to man that measureless, insatiable cruelty is witnessed. 'Twas so in our dear Redeemer's passion; 'twas so in His faithful people's long torture. Far other was it with the Scotsman's country; for the Scotsman had gratified the tyrant's main desire—he had conformed to the heretical creed.

Oh, unspeakable iniquity! 'Tis evil-doing to harass our fellow-man for holding a religious opinion which conscientious searchings of mind and heart have recom-

mended unto him. But for believing the solemn, authoritative teaching of the grand old Church, which spoke with Divine authorisation; for accepting and seeking to practise the law of the Gospel, which she alone impresses on the world's conscience with sacred honesty; for recurring to the Sacraments in order that their souls might be cleansed in the Saviour's Precious Blood and strengthened by His grace; for encompassing the altar while the consecrated priest offered up the Hallowed Victim; for holding full Christian faith, seeking to save their souls by practices of Christian piety, looking for God's help thereunto by their Church's prayers and sacred celebrations, and the while harming no man—that the people were ground down, hunted, exiled, stripped, slain, for that was only because the Evil One had inspired the persecutor's design, guided his policy, and became his coadjutor in rabid war against the Lord and against His chosen people.

How sad the condition of the land when that ruthless policy had operated for some generations, the evil itself rendering effort for deliverance improbable! The common people were stripped of every right; flung naked on the face of their once beautiful land; regarded as animals created but for the service and enjoyment of their masters. The aristocracy were devoid of all moral energy that would prompt effort at deliverance, their political pre-eminence, honour, power, estates—all gone. The Irish Catholic, sallying forth that he might breathe the refreshing sweetness of Heaven's free air, saw in every man around him either a foe or a fellow-sufferer; and when the hateful scorn of the one, or the depressing contemplation of the other, drove him back to his household, for aught he knew the child he had fondly reared might be about to become the venomous serpent to bite him, and the woman he had cherished as loving wife a very Dalila meditating his betrayal. And he knew that the thing they called the law taught and encouraged the hideous violation of the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue, and enforced the system of maraudery and cruelty of which he was the victim. Then was the people's moral dignity brought low, the people's moral status shrunk, their hearts were faint, their

heads bowed down, and while retaining (blest be the Lord!) fidelty to their banned religion, they had, in the main, at least, settled down to endure their wrongs in silence.

But perhaps there was courage in the clergy? Yes; but it was the courage that bore affliction with patient strength; the courage which kept alive the pastoral instinct; which, through ages of bondage and slaughter, secured brave ministration of sacramental blessings to the down-trodden flock. From the priest came word of comfort and cheering smile in hour of gloom; in the priest was found counsellor in doubt and danger; the priest was trusty staff to every faltering one, and his the faithful, loving bosom whereon each wearied spirit in all the isle might find repose. Courage? Yes; in the very shadow of death he lived his daily life; teaching Christian truth, he had the gibbet before his eyes; with Apostolic boldness he lived, laboured, died for the people's weal. And as we tread the hills and vales of this green isle, beneath us lie the unknown martyrs to love and duty, destitute of even the posthumous glory of the Church's aureola, because only the angel of the doomsday has registered their honoured names. But the courage that rises up to right wrong—the courage that sends electric message from mind to mind, from heart to heart—which awakens, rallies, bands together the oppressed for their deliverance—for a long space it was not seen in all the land.

At length over the rolling ocean there came a sound, a sound of uncommon character and significance. It came from the western land whose greatness since then has become one of the wonders of the world; it moved with the racing billows; it mingled with their mighty roar; 'twas the gladsome, thundering shout that advertised unto all the world Columbia's independence. On Erin's rockbound coast it fell, as though the mighty realm, which in after-time was to open her wide arms to afford home and freedom to Ireland's sons, would whisper to the prostrate nation a message of liberty. It was the year 1776. As the startling sound came to our shores, in one corner of the land it blended with the soft lullaby which an old nurse chanted as she rocked a cradle wherein a sleeping babe, one year

old, with rosy blush upon his cheek and gathering ringlets forming upon his head, lay, heedless of the great world's doings, and all unconscious of the singular destiny which the Creator had sealed upon him. Let him sleep a while. —Fear was in the cruel despot. Hope dawned in the ill-treated people. Hope bred effort, and hope prompting to effort fed upon itself. Some of our chains were straightway struck off. Seventeen years later, in 1793, further loosening of bonds was seen. A Catholic organisation had been formed and, the long oppression considered, had worked well for the country's relief. The uprising of '98, ending as it did, naturally brought weakening of the peaceful forces that had been operating good. As the immediately succeeding years went by, alternations of vigour and languor, effectiveness and weakness, were witnessed in the " Catholic Committee," which was the embodiment of such efforts and hopes as then were. Jealousies sprang up; strong differences of view as to policy; sharp cleavages appeared; hopes grew dim; inaction was bred of discouragement, and, alas for the fated people! once again uprose the dismal spectre of famine and stalked through the land. Insult came with hunger; the great ones of the sister country gave alms to Ireland; had Ireland been permitted she could have fed herself. A ship sailed up the lordly Shannon bearing meal, that Irishmen might eat. Four days was that ship detained, to let pass the many ships that bore away from Ireland the corn that would have given her ample supply! In a word, our country was poor, humbled, discouraged, distracted, powerless.

The need called for a *man!* A man! One who from moral eminence should look on all the people, speak to all the people, teach them their rights, teach them their wrongs, show them the causes of their wrongs. A man who should arouse and bind together for united action plebeian and patrician. He should be nerved with vigour of youth, yet sobered with the wisdom of age; with a spirit to fear no difficulties, to brave all opposition, to strike at every enemy, and deal back blow for blow. A man whom the lowly people would love, whom the great would honour; a man of adventurous spirit, dauntless intrepidity, unbounded

resource, of grand audacity; a man inflamed with love for Ireland; whose thoughts should be Irish; whose heart should be Irish; whose bearing should be Irish; one with all the people; reflecting all their feelings; animated by all their national and religious desires; mouthpiece of their loftiest passions, and with an eloquence that should at once give him mastery over his afflicted people and commanding power against all their foes. Blest be the Lord! The man stood forth! and until knell of doom shall ring the world shall cherish his fame, and all good men shall speak the praise of Daniel O'Connell, the liberator of Ireland! "I have heard," said the all-bounteous Father above, "the affliction of my people. And knowing their sorrow, I am come to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians."

The spirit of the Most High whispered Heaven's predestinating ordinance to him whom Heaven's discrimination had chosen for the noble mission. He was the child around whose cradle on Iveragh's sea-beat coast the echoes of America's victorious cheers had played. Forth from that cradle he stepped, and in the child of destiny the germs of singular endowments shot out their buds. One day they took the little fellow by the hand when he was deemed sufficiently quick of perception to value the experience, and with a seriousness unwonted in the family's dealing with him, announced that he was to be shown a "relic." In Cromwell's bloody time a friar once at dawn of day donned the sacred vestments and commenced the celebration of the Holy Mass. Round the simple altar the faithful people knelt, and with tears of religious emotion falling down upon the green sod, and fervid prayers going up to Heaven, they feasted on the forbidden fruit, the well-prized and loved mysteries of the adorable sacrifice. When the solemn moment came, the priest holding in his consecrated hands the True Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, raised it high in the air, and down in profoundest adoration all the people bent. A stir—a cry—a rapid movement—and lo! ere the strong men could rush to save, a helmed and armed soldier had dashed amongst them, and rushing to the priest had with huge sword cleft his head in twain! That martyr's skull became an heirloom in the O'Connell

sept. It was then in Derrynane, this "relic" which they brought this little fellow to see. He gazed and gazed; the tragic tale was told him; his eyes dilated; expression solemn for a child was seen upon his features; he thought—and thought again—and went on with thought; the boy's heart was stirred; they saw the attitude of resolve in the youthful frame; and, mayhap, some keen one standing by made guess that a visto of his life's programme opened before the boy's mind and a solemn purpose formed in his will. Grown to manhood, called to the Bar, there soon distinguished by display of the great gifts wherewith Providence had endowed him, he entered into and became prominent in the then existing committee for Catholic defence. His own talents pressed him forward; his co-religionists' sense of need and perception of his powers drew him forward, and by tacit acclaim he was soon a leader of the people and a guide and sustainment of their movement for redress.

Shall I tell his work? I cannot—I need not. His towering personality, his great achievements transcend so far the standard even of eminence as eminence is witnessed in what I may term its average grade, that scarce could one gifted with his own matchless power of speech portray him justly. And then, what need of it? The figure of him has been before us all even from childhood. Our earliest hero-worship had him for object, and ever since then, whenever there was occasion to fix in fancy the ideal of glorious manhood, of moral power, of noble triumph, it was the robust form of Daniel O'Connell we brought before the mind. No need to describe him. Something, however, as to his life's work the occasion bids me speak; and whereas in O'Connell's history the work he wrought is of smaller moment and possesses less interest for earnest study than the spirit wherein he wrought it, and the character he displayed in his labours, let us, in compendious retrospect of the man's life, note that spirit and character, and take from our study of them the teaching they contain.

A great task lay before him. The Catholic "Relief" Act of 1793 had, judging by its letter, given important concessions to his co-religionists; but in the actual experience of the people, small was the relief that had come. Against

the people's enjoyment of right was the power which ascendency had conferred on their enemies; the screws of oppression had been long riveted. The Catholic had been given the right to vote; his vote was to be tendered under the eye of his Protestant landlord and on behalf of the landlord's Protestant candidate. The Catholic had been legally empowered to serve on a jury; he did so when it pleased the sheriff, who should be a Protestant, to allow him. The law had opened to him certain offices of trust and honour; but all the patronage that governed appointments and elections was in Protestant hands. In these and many other ways was the native Catholic kept under as to the relations and functions of public life. This, and memory of the dreadful times that had been, and force of habit in thought, feeling and comportment, made the ordinary Catholic dwarfed in moral stature, as one who has been accustomed to live in prison cell of low dimensions. If the spirit of the long-oppressed one was downcast and enfeebled, proportionately great was the insolent power of those who were the pet friends of the persecuting system. The non-Catholic lorded it over his "Popish" neighbour, because he and his for generations, with legal sanction, had been wont to do so; his cruel and insulting aggressiveness was all the greater for the giant power of the English nation which he knew was at his back.

But, *the man* had come forth—God's agent to deliver His people. He issued an address to all men of special influence among the Catholic body. It was as the trumpet blast to awaken the sleeping host and rally them beneath the standard. Heedless of some who scorned his vigorous efforts and hopes, of others indignant at being expected to follow in his lead, O'Connell set himself to instruct the nation on its real wants and on the wise policy of redress. At the frequent meetings of the new Catholic Association he always spoke. From the fullness of his intelligent thought and warm feeling on the subject of the country's woes, he dealt forth light and inspiration to his listeners. He noted the cowardice of many, and gradually did he enkindle courage in their breasts. He discovered dangerous subserviency in others,

some Catholic gentlemen being caught in the meshes of insidious plots against their manly alliance with the struggling masses. From the new leader came denunciation of traitorous weakness. He detected in some low, narrow views and selfish projects blending with the noble aims they professed; he saw jealousies that hampered the movement's effectiveness. On all dark ways he flung light; narrow souls and grovelling he shamed; the aim and spirit of true patriotism had all its charms enhanced when set forth with startling eloquence by this champion of public right. He became the brain, the heart, the arm of the country's striving for justice. He was the centre of interest, the source of enthusiasm, in every meeting. The people saw that all their own best and brightest thought for country and creed was in his mind, their deep and earnest feelings in his heart, their combined lofty indignation against wrong flamed in his mighty breast, and they felt that the nation's cry for right would go forth with greatest power when delivered in the thunder of his glorious voice. His flashing into public life made an epoch in Ireland's history. In Ireland's history? Aye, in the history of all human kind! For soon 'twas seen that he who essayed to break our country's chains was one cast in a mould which the Great Creator uses but rarely. Of massive frame, he showed symptoms of giant strength in every pose and movement. Warm heart was his, sympathetic to every suffering man, loving with deep strength and tenderness, and reckoning every man's misery his own. For Ireland that heart throbbed, melted, burned. The sweet love of fond son for mother he gave to the old land; sometimes it was red-hot love, which, bursting from him in glowing sparks of eloquence, warmed and expanded every listening Irishman. It was a delight to him to give expression to his fond love for motherland in the sweet words of a gifted friend:

> "Still shalt thou be my midnight dream,
> Thy glory still my waking theme;
> And every thought and wish of mine,
> Unconquered Erin, shall be thine."

Then with luminous intellect had God enriched him. With understanding, quick and profound, all that came before

his mind he seemed at once to grasp; entangled problems in law court or public discussion he saw through with keen perspicacity. Bright fancy, too, had he; rare power of imagination; sparkling wit, overflowing humour; no stern or grave countenance ever lowered before him that O'Connell could not relax into broad smile as the radiations of pleasantry went forth from the vast source of Hibernian humour stored within him. And oh! the voice of him! Now soft with the mellow sound of music that soothes the troubled spirit; now the clarion shout that rang through spacious halls and awakened the moral activities in all who heard; now like the thunder's roar that fell upon the souls of men; so that when to half a million men on Tara's plain,

"Walled by wide air and roofed by boundless heaven,"

he poured forth the claims of truth and justice, and the blue vault above made the glorious sound reverberate, I can fancy them asking with sense of awe if it were not some echo of the voice of the Great Creator that dwelt in that mighty tone.

Such the man whom bountiful Providence bestowed on the land to uplift her to her rightful estate. And truly generous service did Ireland receive from her noble son. His toiling in the public cause was stupendous. For hours and hours in the close atmosphere of the courts of law he pleaded the defence of needy litigants; thence he rushed to the evening assemblies of the Catholic Committee. From engrossing work in the Metropolis swift-footed steeds bore him through the provincial towns to deal out on all sides counsel, guidance, enthusiasm, defence against wrong. Into every detail of injustice he peered; every incident, every aspect of all that concerned the country's religious interest he examined; every trembling one he encouraged; every rogue and tyrant he denounced. The surpassing greatness of his endowments led to universal sense of dependence on him. Methinks, brethren, I see in him the brave captain of some ship imperilled in portentous storms. 'Tis dark night; tumultuous billows rage; the crew are stricken with terror that confounds the judgment and weakens the arm. All is danger; all is effortless despair,

save for the one clear mind, the one dauntless heart, and the one strong arm in him who holds the tossing, quivering, agonising vessel in the grasp of his high capacity and leads her forth from all her perils. Something such was our great O'Connell; at least, something such I say he was, for I have not engaged to paint the transcendent hero as he was. In the poverty of speech to portray him, in the insufficiency of my fancy's power to set before my own mind just image of him, I do but pour out as one who rhapsodises some words less unworthy than others, yet all unworthy of this wondrous human being.

And for all the glorious thing he was, and all that he achieved, how did not the people love him? Miles and miles over hill and dale they went to gaze upon the stalwart form, and look into his jocund face, and drink in the draught of his peerless eloquence. With proud delight many a mother held high in the air her little one that the most coveted sight all the land could offer might gladden the innocent soul, and that not merely in the measured speech of the aged, but "from the mouths of infants and sucklings" the fond praise of him might be uttered. Yes, the people's reverent love was his. But—better for his fame—the hate of evil men was his, and their fear of him likewise. Every tyrannising lord of the soil used to the grinding of his "Popish" serf; every man who shared the discreditable work of oppressing the country; every rabid Orangeman petted by Ireland's foes to maintain the wrong of his fellow-man; every base coward of the Catholic body, who vilely hugged his chains—hated and feared the great tribune.

Feared him. Feared him, brethren, for what? Was it the arms of physical warfare he bore? Ah, Christian men and men of sound sense who hear me, how Ireland's enemies and O'Connell's enemies would have rejoiced and applauded him had he taught the people to take up sword of steel to right his country's wrongs; had he instituted a system of secret meeting and oath-bound conspiracy for Ireland's freedom! How glad the heart-beat of the base informer did he but know that a secret society, the element whereon he sails when driving his iniquitous trade,

had been formed in the land! How hopeful a tyrannical British Prime Minister, thus seeing prospect of quenching the fires of revolt in the people's blood, and then riveting their chains anew! May every brave Irishman to whom fool or traitor comes with proposal of enrolment in secret society, under pretext of his country's weal, reject the lying promise and hate the harmful folly of it. No, not cannon ball nor gleaming sword was feared. What then? Was it the power of gold wielded by him? No. Was it his influence in gilded courts that made them tremble? No. They feared truth—they feared justice—when truth and justice found in O'Connell a heart to throb, an eye to glisten, and an eloquent tongue to persuade. They feared him for what he wrought upon the mass of his countrymen. Before his day, afflicted Ireland lay tranquil in her chains. She was as the sea in motionless, soundless slumber. He came and breathed upon the calm waters—they were stirred. Again he breathed on them—they were quickened into life; his inspiring influence went on to operate; he caused upheaval of waves; he lashed them into foam, and seizing in his mighty arms the raging flood of the nation's sacred wrath, he dashed it against the citadel of religious ascendancy and brought the unholy thing down in crumbling ruins. Into the Senate House of England, whose floor no Catholic had been permitted to tread, the Irish chieftain went, the pathway to its honours and councils carved by the stout sword of moral power wielded in his own lusty arm. The prison wall, behind which his religion was held captive, he razed, and on the 13th day of April, 1829, a message came across the Channel bidding the emancipated millions of her children to

> "Sound the loud timbrel o'er Erin's dark sea,
> Jehovah had triumphed—His people were free!"

Catholic emancipation was an accomplished fact!

Men may ask—what, after all, has Daniel O'Connell done? No small breaking of his country's chains was effected before him. On the other hand, Protestant ascendancy outlived him. Wherefore this association of his name with the procuring of signal good for his country?

My dear brethren, I might give reply by mere enumeration of the large concessions of right won by him. The opening of Parliament to Catholics; the opening to them the way to the advantages presented in army and navy; their admission to right of interference in general and local taxation; security for disbursement of Catholic charities; building of churches and schools; maintenance of orphanages and hospitals, and holding of Catholic property, and other things not few nor insignificant. But, not in tabulated record of the statutory concessions he wrung from the British Parliament should we look for O'Connell's chief claim on Ireland's grateful love and the tribute she pays to his honoured memory to-day. Ireland is his debtor —the world is his debtor—for this. In the first place he, more than any man that ever lived, taught the world what moral force can effect! The argument of "banded millions' might" he revealed. Europe, while O'Connell was in his prime, was overshadowed by the terror of one man, master of the art of war. That one man, who had played with the power of great empires, England vanquished, and when they had brought down Bonaparte the rulers of England feared no foe in all the armed camps of Europe. 'Twas that proud and strong race that held Catholic Ireland in bonds. And the very man who alone proved a match for Bonaparte was Prime Minister of the realm when Catholic Ireland, and good men of liberal hearts among the Protestants of Ireland, made the demand for freedom. And it is written in history that England's mighty power, and England's great leader in peace and war, feared when, looking upon the tumult of our people's uprising, they saw the giant personality of the great Tribune riding with serene power the whirlwind he had created. Again, our great liberator taught to the individual true manly bearing. To our fathers who lived in his day and saw it, to any of our generations who strive to realise it, the man's attitude was a striking lesson. The dense cloud of gloom under which he wrought, the enormous mass of oppressing evil under whose weight he laboured, the disheartening circumstances in the midst of which he carried on the struggle, the prodigious power he had to encounter; let account

be made of all this while one measures his great achievements. It had been declared by royal lips that never should a Catholic enter Parliament; and strong must have been the prejudice such assertion produced. Opposed to him were wealth, rank, learning, eloquence, traditional prestige, state-craft unembarrassed by conscience. View him after he had entered the Parliament of Britain. Around him the rabid enemies of his race and creed. With alternating frown and jeer they sought to overcome him. Their finest orators and most skilled debaters were there arrayed against him. The glamour of wealthy fashion, all on the enemy's side, blazed down upon him, and the sense of proud mastery was in them all. And "alone stood brave Horatio!"—a hero whose being was built of adamant. Bring out from history's records all the world's great ones—Cæsar, Charlemagne, Bonaparte—they had on their side all he had arrayed against him—money, armies, sanction of law. Truly, for bravery in war, so far as it has become known to his fellow-men, all the world's heroes must yield the palm to this immortal son of our own green isle.

In the next place, O'Connell, as part of his signal courage, illustrated a requirement of God's service of which our age appears sadly disregardful. Dearest brethren, it is this age's practice—it is almost the age's theory—that virtue and vice are to be called by the same name. Opposition to our Lord's interests makes baneful expression of itself in amiable generalities, meant to construct and maintain a standard which the revealed Gospel condemns. We are told we must be prudent;—so we must. We are reminded we must be courteous;—so we must. And inoffensive;—yes. But the latter-day spirit, which prompts these sapient admonitions, is the Evil Spirit, which refuses to have right and wrong accurately labelled; which would shelter the enemy of God and His Church by obscuring the lines that discriminate him from the dutiful Christian. Is the decree that canonised my great father in religion, Dominic de Guzman, to be blotted out because this amiable age, this courteous age, this inoffensive and tolerant age, has discovered that the love of God within his heart made him hurl denunciation against all that gainsaid the claims

of God and would lead to Satan's interest countervailing against His most sacred rights? Eternal Perfection, Eternal Wisdom, Eternal Charity, assumed a human body, and prophetic guarantee had been given that the "bruised reed He would not break, nor the smoking flax extinguish." But His gentleness and courtesy and inoffensiveness was true and holy. It dulled not His eye when He would flash anger against iniquity; it withheld not His arm when He would scourge the profaners from the Temple; it was not permitted to temper His speech when his Divine Holiness bade Him call wicked men a "brood of vipers." So "offensive" was He to a wicked and adulterous generation that they nailed Him to a cross. In the spirit of militant Christianity our great O'Connell had the wisdom which directed him to call evil by its proper name, and employ the resource of strong language when the cause of the Most High was to be defended.

Another lesson did this Irish chieftain teach, and with brief expounding of it I shall cease to make trial of your kindly patience. This man who, awaking the sleeping millions of his countrymen from their sad lethargy in order that, by arousing and organising them, he might win their freedom, trusted not in his own resources and the people's combined strength alone for the coveted victory. He knew, as few popular leaders have ever known, that if he were to prevail in combat against iniquitous tyranny, it was not enough that the smile of loving trust and salvos of applause should come to him from the people below, unless there came upon him from above Heaven's helpful benediction. His life, his labours, his triumphs, were based on supernatural faith. This spirit of faith was exercised in the first place with wise care of his own soul. He knew the stupendous issue set before every child of Adam; he knew the strength of evil passions, he knew the manifold dangers that beset each one in the spiritual combat. Hence he valued the ordinary means of grace, and zealously sought to safeguard his immortal soul. After he had gone from this world of combat, they whose office it was to examine his papers, found among them his "Rule of Life." By a happy privilege it is in my power to read it to you. The

man, whose solicitude, labour, and combat for the public weal were great beyond our conceiving, wrote down this programme of sacred precautions for his due serving of the Lord: "1. To avoid every wilful occasion of temptation. 2. To appeal to God, and to invoke the Blessed Virgin and the saints in all temptations. 3. To say the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity every day. 4. To repeat as often as may be a shorter form. 5. To say daily, at least, and as often as may be, a fervent Act of Contrition. 6. To begin every day with an unlimited offering of myself to my Crucified Redeemer, and to conjure Him by all His infinite merits and Divine charity, to take me under His direction and control in all things. 7. To meditate for at least half an hour every day, if possible—longer, if God pleases. 8. 'We fly to Thy patronage,' and St Bernard's prayer to the Virgin, as often as may be convenient—daily. 9. To pray daily to God, His Blessed Mother, and all the saints for a happy death. 10. To avoid carefully small faults and venial sins—even the smallest. 11. To aim at pleasing God in all my daily actions, and to be influenced by the love of God in all, rather than by hope or fear."

This spirit of faith showed itself secondly by his habit of seeking mainly through the Divine aid his country's deliverance. One memorable night debate waxed hot in Westminster on the Emancipation Bill. Much discussion was carried on—arguments on one side—reply and counter-arguments, again rejoinders thereunto; 'twas warm debate, and warm the interest of all who listened. A gentleman sought for quiet walk and some space of tranquil thought a secluded place in the vicinity of the Parliament house. He knew the momentous struggle that was being waged within. Leaving the thronged quarters, and turning a corner of the massive building which led him to his desired seclusion, he was amazed to see there, pacing to and fro in silence, with serene calm of feature and bearing, the man interested beyond all men in the momentous matter that was being debated within the House. "What!" he exclaimed, "O'Connell! you here? Are you aware that the Emancipation Bill is before the House? Or has your interest in the subject cooled?" "I know what is before the House,"

the great man made answer; "I am endeavouring to aid the passing of the Bill," and as he spoke he held up the beads he had been passing through his fingers: he was speaking to the Mother of God, that her prayers might bring down the blessing of the Most High upon his cause. My Lord Cardinal, Rev. Fathers, and you, faithful people, that was the man to stand for Ireland's cause in the Imperial Senate. The sentiment and the hope was in him which was in the great Apostle when he asked: "If God be for us, who is against us?" The man of faith cast round his noble struggle an atmosphere of religion. He did what all should do—he brought his catechism into the street; into the public assembly at home; into the English Parliament; into the centre of the world's activity. Our Irish Tribune remembered that for him individually and for the country he loved so well it would profit naught to gain the whole world if there were loss of God's eternal inheritance. It would have been pain to his Christian heart if his country secured highest temporal aggrandisement at the cost of least degree of the grace of God. St Audeon's Church in Dublin City echoed his Christian declaration: "We will consent to forego our civil rights for ever rather than obtain their restitution by any compromise of religious principles." This sentiment he would have guide the purpose of champions of liberty all the world over. But for Ireland he felt there was special reason to value the enrichment and nobility that comes of supernatural grace.

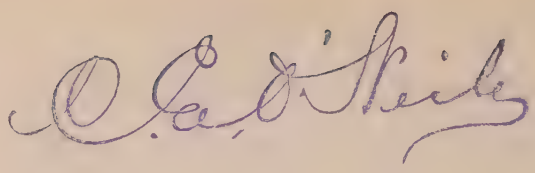
If Ireland were ever great before the world, it was with the greatness begotten of religion. The knowledge of her in foreign lands—the knowledge, I mean, which involves glory unto her—was ever, and is now, the knowledge of her as a race of brave fidelity to the Church of God. Let her political and commercial status have been what it might; were she in the gladsome sunshine or in dismal gloom, rejoicing in triumphant power, or naked, impoverished, down-trodden, outcast, bleeding unto death —she was "great, glorious, and free," so long as she held in her hand the Cross of Jesus Christ, and had in her heart and on her lips loyal faith and love of the eternal God.

See the servant of the Lord in the great Flavian amphitheatre, manacled, doomed. Encircling him in those vast galleries round about eighty thousand pagans in the insolent pride of Roman citizenship, and with fervid hate of his Christian creed. But the discretion that is based on the revelation of eternal truth bids us be assured that the condemned one, though bereft of all material goods, was rich; though alone amidst myriad foes had the unseen patronage of shining angels to sustain him; though subject even unto cruel death to Cæsar's ruthless power, was greater than Cæsar, and that when the bolts were backward shot of the grim dungeons that held the agents of Roman torture, and roaring lion and fierce tiger and pitiless panther bounded forward and tore him into a hundred fragments, the consummation of his ignominy, his weakness, and his torment was the dawning of his never-ending riches and glory. Even so with our ancient race. For fourteen hundred years were there question of relative nobility of nations, an Irishman had leave from all the world to stand forth and say: "My country is great." This was accepted historic truth. And never was it asked: "What is the sum of her armed battalions? What is the strength of her fleet? What empires has she conquered?" No—the category under which her proud pre-eminence was tabulated all recognised. She had patent of nobility from her faith, her hope, and her love; her bright, and deep, and strong, and warm, brave Catholicity. For this chiefly did the great O'Connell admire and love her, and that the dear old land might be—till angel's trumpet shall announce the doom—strong in her allegiance to the Church of God, was the magnificent ambition of his great heart.

May our faithful attachment never be canvassed by a leader who will be unlike O'Connell in this! May no Irishman, on whom a past of glorious religion lays weight of responsibility, ever sustain by speech or vote a wicked man who besmears patriotism by ingratitude and irreverence towards the ministers of his Church. "I accept neither co-operation nor help from men whose anti-religious declamation inspire me with *profound disgust*." There is more of the liberator's eloquent wisdom. In that fashion

of thought and feeling and purpose, the great and good man lived and died.

When the awful famine came, his people's abysmal sorrow did what not all the frowns and jeers and opposition of a thousand million enemies could do: it brought his noble spirit down; it silenced the diapason of the peerless voice; it bowed and shrivelled the giant frame; it broke his lion heart. —He had been wont to seek sustainment in religion. In his supreme grief he would go to the centre of religion. He would look upon the hallowed person of the earthly representative of the Son of God, and would then ask the Master to dismiss His servant in peace. 'Twas not to be. In Genoa the superb, this very week fifty years ago, when the midnight chime was tolling, there went through the streets a procession of surpliced clerks with lights and tinkling bells, and prayerful groups of the faithful. They who met it on its way perceived with surprise that it was not one of the ordinary parochial clergy who bore the Adorable Sacrament, it was the Cardinal Archbishop himself, and pomp was there such as they had not seen before in the carrying of the Holy Viaticum. They soon learned that the greatest man in the world, the famed Irish chief, was dying in their historic city. There and then he expired, and—may the Lord have mercy on his soul! He took his last look at his native land when, supported on the steamer's deck by the arms of his chaplain and his medical adviser, his tearful eyes saw the beautiful emerald isle with the sad cloud of the famine lowering over her. When he shall see her again—not her verdant fields, her lakes and dells, her mountains bold—for all these shall pass away; but her people—the Irish race—for whom he toiled and died;—when he shall see it again—may it be enthroned and crowned in Heaven!



BLESSED THADDEUS McCARTHY.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL, CORK, ON OCCASION OF TRANSLATION OF HIS RELICS, 12*th September*, 1897.

"My enemies have spoken evils against me: when shall he die and his name perish? . . . All my enemies whispered together against me. . . . But Thou, O Lord, have mercy on me, and raise me up again. . . . By this I know that Thou hast a good will for me; because my enemy shall not rejoice over me. But Thou hast upheld me by reason of my innocence; and hast established me in Thy sight for ever" (Psalm xl.).

My Lords, Very Reverend Brethren, dearest faithful in Christ—This is a great day for Ireland. Despite her long, dark thrall, oft has wave of sunshine passed over her, and resounding Hosannas expressed the nation's feeling. Stately processions have trod our streets; now for proud escort of popular hero; now for picturesque display of municipal splendour; at one time for impressive accompaniment of the demand for national right; at another for outpouring of faith and religious feeling. But we, who marched in this morning's sun, you who lined the way, all that gazed from hill, and casement, and house-top at the long stream of clergy that flowed between the living banks of our parochial societies, enjoyed an experience not given to Irishmen for nigh seven hundred years. In that long flow of time grace has indeed come in plenteous bestowal on many a soul of our race in this Christian land, and fructified unto eminent sanctification. As we tread the land that bore us, walk her vales, climb her hills, and wander through her forests green, there lie beneath our feet the mortal remains that once enshrined spirits of exalted saintliness. But not since the year 1226, when Pope Honorius III. proclaimed the celestial glory of Laurence O'Toole, the great Archbishop of Dublin, has it been given to

Ireland to see borne through her streets with full circumstance of religious homage the bones of a beatified son of her bosom. Verily "many kings and prophets have desired to see what we see and they have not seen." Our fathers, their fathers, our faithful ancestors, yearned for the gladsome pride that is ours to-day—to see a son of our old land crowned with the diadem of the Church's immortality; to be authorised to come into the House of God and lift heavenward eye and heart and voice, and in public worship supplicate one of the heroes of the ethereal kingdom, and call him by an Irish name. A great day, truly, for our motherland: praised be the Lord Who has given us to share its festive joy!

What shall I speak, brethren, of him in whose honour we are assembled? I hold in my hand a picture of the blessed one. As I gaze upon it, noting it in full detail, mind and heart discern more than eye of body can see. The holy man stands dressed in pilgrim garb. He grasps in his hand, and leans upon, a pilgrim's staff. He is at the doorstep of a plain, massive building. That building is a hospice, where simple meal and night's rest were given to the houseless poor. His pose is as of one who has knocked at its portals and now entreats admission within its walls. He seems to say: "See my wearied condition, pity me, shelter me." Behind the saint, not seen by him, there is an angel—an angel bright and fair indeed; a being of everlasting youth. The heavenly spirit holds in his right hand a mitre, in his left hand a pastoral staff, the episcopal crozier. He seems to follow after the servant of God, on whom he looks with graceful admiration. Above the angel there comes streaming down from the sky a flood of golden rays, which direct themselves towards the holy pilgrim. That picture speaks; it tells a tale and points a moral. The blessed one's person, lowly and poor; the pilgrim's rough tunic, his robe; the pilgrim's staff and wallet, his whole possession; the view presented to his gaze, the humble shelter for poor wanderers. Thus he himself; his actual experience; his immediate prospect; all lowliness and poverty. On the other hand, behind him, hidden from his eyes, held in angel

hands, are the jewelled mitre and gilded crozier, emblems of honour and power; while from the sky above comes the resplendent intimation of his acceptability before God, and the promise of unending glory to come. Humiliation and hardship, his actual present; ennoblement and bliss, the eternal future; a sowing in tears by one who is to reap in joy.

Our sacred hero's lot was cast in rough and evil times. Evil times are almost all times, for the primal disarrangement of the Divine plan by human sin made the world an evil place. But evil time and rough was that in which the brief life of Blessed Thaddeus was passed. The passion which in all the ages has led men to offend God for sake of gain, in those days prompted to almost incessant conflict of man with man. The ploughshare was exchanged for the sword. Yearning to wrest from one another much-prized worldly possessions, men thought of war, spoke of war, dreamed of war, lived in war. New elements of division, interests and feelings, introduced into our island by the partial occupation of the English invader, served, along with ancient tribal differences, to establish strong lines of demarcation, and set up a multitude of contending parties. Warmth of hostile feeling, maintaining contentions among families and septs, could scarce fail to exercise influence on ecclesiastical concerns. Princes and chieftains, eager for domination, sought to have members of their clans appointed to episcopal sees within their respective domains. Noble and wealthy looked with jealous eye at the elevation to episcopal dignity of the scion of rival Celtic houses, while Celtic tribes beheld with indignation the filling of a vacant see by one of Norman name and blood. Nor were those feelings kept in the heart. Strong and loud protestation was uttered, angry retort made, and in an age when eloquent tongue, as means of urging a claim or assailing an enemy, was held in small esteem, the inflamed heart quickly prompted men to unsheath the sword and rush to fiery combat. Over much of the district extending west and northward of Cork city the historic sept of the McCarthys had long held royal sway, and against that ancient princely house were Norman hatred and jealousy mainly exercised.

A McCarthy stood forth in place of signal honour amongst all the nobility of the land. High in Church and State from the earliest times, it is the proud boast of a McCarthy that the nobles of this great empire whose heraldic glory is most impressive are but of yesterday when compared with his ancient kingly stock.

It was, therefore, with eyes of wrathful jealousy the fierce clans of Munster beheld the appointment to the bishopric of Ross, in the year 1482, of young Thaddeus, in whose veins the blood of the royal McCarthys flowed. Only twenty-seven summer suns had shone upon the noble ecclesiastic, but signal virtue and eminent philosophical and theological science had won the approval of the Church authority, and prompted the unusual action of consigning to one so young the grave pastoral charge. He was consecrated in the Eternal City on the 3rd day of May. It was the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross. Providence mayhap ordained that the day should intimate to the thoughtful young prelate promise of tribulation in the career which then opened before him. Straightway he found himself involved in a sea of trouble. On his return to Ireland there stood before him a rival claimant to the see of Ross. His predecessor had an assistant bishop. The assistant, desirous of cloister life, resigned his position, but, judging at a later date that religious life was not his destined lot, he resumed his place as auxiliary administrator of the diocese. The factious spirit in the breasts of the tribal chiefs eagerly seized on the occasion for harassing, and, if possible, getting rid of, a prelate belonging to the hated McCarthy sept. It is recorded that the then Earl of Desmond had on his solemn oath declared that a McCarthy should never grasp the crozier of a Munster diocese. The machinery of intrigue was put in motion. Falsehood—ever familiar instrument in the hands of unscrupulous envy—was planned, formulated, and dispatched to Rome. Slanderous accusations against the holy prelate were spoken in the ears of the supreme head of the Church. The difficulty of communication between Rome and distant countries in that age rendered it no easy task for the rulers of the Church to discriminate between truth and error, or for a

man traduced by evil tongues to correct the malevolent misrepresentations. Envious lying triumphed for a space over the just man; he was censured by the sovereign pontiff. Immediately he went to Rome to plead for right in his own person before the chief pastor. After lengthened inquiry had been made, authoritative announcement came to the ears of Thaddeus that the sovereign ecclesiastical power had appointed him to the more important—indeed, the most important—position, in a sense, in the Irish Church at that period—the diocese of united Cork and Cloyne. Rome's definite pronouncement terminated the dispute.

Oh, dearest brethren, what precious blessing to live under supreme sacred authority! How good for us that we are not as "sheep without a shepherd," but have set over us by Power Divine, a ruler unto whom all must render submission. Be the multitude of the Church's members never so vast, one there is at whose binding God the Almighty binds; at whose loosing, the Almighty looses. One, the divinely established firmness of whose authority is our safeguard against the weakness and inconstancy of our wills, and the dissensions our contending passions would entail. One superb master of all Christendom, raised so high above all human judgment, human interest, human authority, and placed so near the very God Whose vicar he is, that unto him are given the very thunders of Heaven to hurl upon the wayward one that shall dare gainsay his supreme decision. Ah, what woe—humiliating woe—is the condition of them that are without the fold, and yet make the blind profession that they are of the Christian Communion! Communion of belief they have not. Communion of subordination to one authority they have not. It was said to them of old by the Divine Master: "There shall be one fold and one shepherd": that design of the Christian religion we Catholics alone realise.

Back to Ireland came Thaddeus to take possession of his new charge. Ere long it was made clear to him that he had also to bear the burden of new troubles. Considerable wealth was attached to his exalted position. Generations of pious Catholics had created large endow-

ments for the united diocese. For rapacious and combative Norman chiefs there was strong temptation to political jealousy and avarice in the acquisition of ample possessions by one of the old Irish septs. The famed Geraldines, yearning for lordly sway throughout Munster, abetted by chiefs whose name and blood are to this day found over the main portion of this extensive country, seized the ecclesiastical lands. As the working of the law of spiritual gravitation ordinarily provides, wrong begat wrong. Early venture in sin led to a course of sin. The usurpers having seized the Church lands brought so far their factious impiety as to close the doors of his Cathedral Church against the lawful pastor. It was might opposing right. It meant sorrow for the young bishop. At the uplifting of his finger a thousand Muskerry swords would have flashed through all Muskerry's plains in his defence; but arm of flesh he would not employ against the wicked ones. He bowed before the storm in meek endurance of the personal irreverence. But as bishop he was the sworn custodian of ecclesiastical rights: he had been set up as sentinel to watch the safety of the Church's goods and the assertion of pastoral authority. While therefore "fulfilling justice" in the meekness that bore the personal affront he would fulfil *all* justice by vindicating in an orderly manner the Church's outraged claims. Down that river once again he sailed; he went forth once more from the beautiful harbour and travelled southward to speak his plaint and demand vindication of the Church's supreme head. At the feet of Pope Innocent VIII. he knelt. The aged pontiff laid his trembling hands on the youthful bishop's head, and imparted the benediction, which, like Jehova's mandate to Moses in days of old, has emboldened many a harassed one to encounter every threatening peril and stand for God and right against ten thousand foes. Into his hands Pope Innocent gave a brief on the 7th day of July, 1492, which condemned the wicked usurpers and menaced the Church's vigorous penalties if they surrendered not the sacred property they had seized. To the then lord deputy of Ireland the holy father wrote calling upon his aid on behalf of the ill-treated prelate. At the same time the

venerable pontiff did signal honour to the several chiefs of the clan McCarthy by appointing them formally and by name protectors of their holy kinsman. Thaddeus rose from his place at the pontiff's feet. Into the venerable face he looked, as did we all to whom it has been given to gaze upon the vicar of Jesus Christ, with streaming tears of blended love and awe; then bade dutiful farewell.

He donned pilgrim's garb; came forth from the gate of the Eternal City, and turned his steps towards home. The wide Campagna he traversed, and ere long found himself in fair and favoured Umbria. Oh, how his saintly instinct must have taught him to relish the balmy air of thrice blessed Umbria! Thrice blessed, did I say? A thousand times blessed—for is it not Umbria on whose soft plains and stately hills the Most High did so pour down His blessing that more saints have sprung from her than from any region in all the wide world? And, dearest brethren, may I say to you—may I at least think it, and speak my thought? Methinks as the youthful prince, bishop, saint, from this old land of ours walked those vales teeming with memories of God's glorious servants, they, enthroned in Heaven, kept watch upon him, and noted with loving interest his way, and his cause, and his strange story. When he had issued from the Roman Campagna and drew nigh to Viterbo, it were meet to think that Rose, the glorious saint of the old city, looking down from high Heaven upon her natal place—she who in her brief mortal life loved to pray Heaven's interposition for the Church's tranquillity—it were meet to think that she looked upon the persecuted prelate and wished him thenceforth victorious peace. I wonder—did he move somewhat eastward from the direct route? Surely yes, for scarce could such as he resist the magnetic power which draws all fervid Christians who traverse Italy to gaze upon and mount the fair hill from whose side Assisi smiles upon the plain beneath. I behold with mind's eye Francis, the seraph, looking with admiring interest on the Irish pilgrim prelate, and bespeaking gifts from on high upon the man to whom his sons here in Cork were to pay dutiful homage. Farther north he came upon an Umbrian city, dear to me beyond all spots the sun and

moon shine upon—the city that gave to earth, gave to the Church, gave to Heaven one of the fairest adornments of God's mystic kingdom, and gave to the Dominican Order one of its proudest glories, Siena—Siena, admirable to the æsthetic appreciation of the lovers of art, delightful to the Christian soul. Something leads me to think that Catherine, already more than a hundred years enthroned in Heaven, but fond of hovering in thought above her beautiful town, may have seen the servant of God pass by, and noted that he came from Rome—from the Pope—with the sign upon him of Peter's approval, to sustain him in conflict for the Church's weal. And, oh, how did not she in whose heart love of the Church's rights was as red-hot passion—how did she not beam ethereal smile on the young ecclesiastic from our motherland who bore upon his person the document that was to tell each loyal man and woman in this city of Cork that he was to be recognised as the ruler of the Church of God in these parts?

Onward he came beneath the shadow of the Appenine Range. Long was the way; difficult was journeying then; weary he was and footsore. At length he beheld before him the mighty Alps. It will be arduous toil and painful—he must have thought—to climb their vast sides and pass their lofty peaks. His limbs are heavy with fatigue; his frame enfeebled; he drags his weary way. Pitiless rains have beat upon him; the sun's burning rays have played upon him; blinding dust has swept past him. We may conjecture that hunger came with other experiences to make up the cross he bore in holy patience; and this in a strange land, yet not strange, for to the servant of God all the earth is home—our Father's house. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." This pious assurance was in Thaddeus' mind, as weary and pained he pursued his toilsome way. The grass plains he trod the Great Creator had spread out; in the long-reaching vineyards each savoury fruit was His gracious formation; the mighty Alps that frowned upon him, rearing high in air their giant peaks —their deep foundations God had laid, their massive sides built up, and to the saintly eye of the pilgrim they must not have seemed mere senseless things, but lordly sentinels

keeping watch over the Great Master's wide domain. And when at noon the resplendent sun shed from his fiery bosom wealth of gladdening light and heat, or in soundless midnight he looked upon the gentle moon as she traced her silver path across the sky, did he not remember that each recurring day in the Divine office he was wont to call upon these heavenly luminaries to magnify the Most High, whose handiwork and obedient servants they were? So did all external things enter into his holy thought, and preach to him God's gracious power and love as he drew nigh to a city invested with historic interest, even before the Christian era, but now destined to be, till trumpet of doom shall sound, associated with the story of the servant of God.

Not Blessed Thaddeus McCarthy has created the interest for Catholics in that Piedmontese town—Ivrea; greater than he had long before trod its streets. In 431 a man who had been on Irish soil, not indeed walking the noble halls of the proud castles of McCarthy's princely house, but feeding swine on Antrim's hills, Patrick, the man of gladsome destiny for the Irish race, while wending his way to Rome to receive authorisation to preach Christianity in Ireland, made Ivrea his resting-place. It is told by some historians that it was there he received episcopal consecration. Did Thaddeus, entering its streets, become sensible of some mysterious suggestion that it was the place for an Irish bishop to rest his weary limbs? In Ivrea he did take his rest. He sought the asylum for needy travellers; he begged and received admission, and when he cast himself exhausted on the simple couch in that place of Christian shelter, his journeying came to an end. The sun went down upon him calmly sleeping after his lengthened pilgrimage. The lights went out; the solemn peace of night came and brooded over the place. God sent His herald angel to bring His faithful one's trials to an end, and bear him to his heavenly home. Alone was he when the visitation of death came. No physician to prescribe relief; no gentle nurse to soften hard experience and minister relieving draught; no faithful friend to sustain him. There may have been things no human historian has recorded.

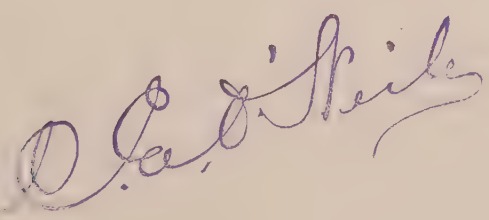
Golden-winged nurses perhaps were round about him, sent down from Heaven to minister to his enfeebled body, and then escort his soul to the eternal rest. Patrick, Fachnan, Colman, Finbarr—the Great Lord may have allowed them to come down from the sky that night to cheer and bless their faithful successor. Morning came; the prescribed round of inspection was made by those whose part it was; they found the lowly stranger in the calm sleep of death. But wherefore the cry of wonder which escaped them? Dead they perceived him; lowly of state as when he had begged charitable shelter the previous night; but brilliant light encompassed him, and a glory not of earth was round about him; the bed whereon he lay seemed enveloped in flames! The cry brought the curator of the hospice and all the attendants. Message was sent in haste to tne bishop of Ivrea, announcing the startling fact. He who bore the strange tale found the bishop filled already with sensational interest produced by a dream of the night that had passed. In sleep there had flashed into his sight a saintly form clad in episcopal robes. Having shone before him for a brief space the mysterious form uprose from the earth and sailed through shining clouds to Heaven's gate. While exercised in mind over this prodigy the prelate was summoned to the hospice to see the wonder that was there. He saw the dead man illuminated by the supernatural light. They told the bishop of his coming the previous eve poorly clad, and carrying naught save his simple staff and pilgrim's wallet. The pilgrim's wallet they opened, when, lo! they found a pectoral cross, an episcopal ring, the Papal Bull which told of his appointment to the bishopric of Cork and Cloyne, and the sentence of condemnation issued against those who had usurped the temporalities of his see. A sense of awe came upon those assembled. Down upon their knees they fell, while the bishop approached and looked upon the face of the dead. It was the face that had gleamed resplendent upon him in the vision of the night, and then he knew he looked upon one of the saints of God. With reverent care they robed the body in episcopal dress. The chapter of the diocese was summoned. It was resolved to call the citizens that they might

see the wondrous sight; but no need to do it. With no man's hand to swing them, out pealed the Cathedral bells. In thousands flocked the people, and a long procession escorted the remains of the illustrious dead to the stately Temple. From all the surrounding country and from the sloping sides of the Alps came in vast multitudes the faithful people, and with loud acclaim they praised the Lord in His hidden saint.

The Cross—gloom and pain—while he lived; triumph on earth and in Heaven after death. Triumph on earth. Brethren, who that saw in Ivrea on that October evening in the year of 1492 a poor, wearied, footsore man knock at the hospitable door and beg a night's housing, would have dreamed that after more than four hundred years had rolled by those antique streets spanned by floral arches should fill with countless throng; that festal adornment should grace all public buildings; that immense waves of music should swell towards Heaven to give expression to the jubilant piety of prelates from many lands and vast multitudes of the people; that its Cathedral Church, draped in every beauteous colour, and aflame with a thousand lights, should be the scene of a grand, awe-inspiring celebration, all to honour the humble pilgrim whom the Church's authority had uplifted to the immortal glory of her beatified heroes? He had sown in tears; he reaps in joy. His enemies had spoken evil against him; but Thou, O Lord, didst have mercy upon him, and Thou didst raise him up again. Thou didst uphold him by reason of his innocence, and Thou hast established him in Thy sight for ever!

Dearly beloved, it is well that, with sacred theory taught us in the Divine Word, we should have impressive illustration of the same in the history of God's brave servants. Momentary and light is our tribulation. Weighty and eternal the glory that accrues. The clouds shall pass, and soon; the wounds shall be healed; the burden be uplifted; the prison door flung open; our temporal bondage shall be changed into the liberty of the everlasting kingdom. Joy that men taste apart from the service of God is transient as the morning vapour; possessions of earth's dross shall come to naught; triumphant power, material

aggrandisement, shall cease. But the good of God's grace, the glory of the Divine friendship, the peace of a sinless heart—no incident of human life avails to affect them; they are enshrined in the soul; angels keep guard around them, and they endure for ever. I think of the great Flavian amphitheatre of pagan Rome. Gone are the piled-up thousands who thronged its mighty galleries; silent the echoes of their thundering plaudits. Cæsar, who in imperial splendour sat high in state upon his burnished throne, is dead; the gilding of his coronet faded; his power and glory lost for ever. But the slave whom they set in the arena for furious beasts to feed upon—who, with sign of the Cross upon him, went down before the onslaught of the hungry monsters—he lives. Lives—aye, reigns, "and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Reigns even on earth; the scattered bones which the palpitating lion and tiger crunched on the sands of the Colosseum are now in fair caskets enshrined, and on festal days, that shall recur to the day of doom, are borne through the vaulted aisles of gorgeous fanes and the decorated streets of earth's proudest cities. It was so with God's servants made victims of Rome's anti-Christian hate; it was so with our new patron, Blessed Thaddeus McCarthy; it is decreed to be so with us if we endure for the Lord's sake the trials that are; bear unflinching the burden of the law; adhere to right at all cost, and, in life and death, be true to God.



IRELAND'S SHATTERED SANCTUARIES: THEIR RE-BUILDING.

DISCOURSE DELIVERED AT LAYING OF CORNER-STONE OF NEW CHURCH, CHARLEVILLE, 18*th September*, 1898.

"THEN Judas and his brethren said: Behold, our enemies are discomfited; let us go up now to cleanse the holy places, and to repair them." Words found in the 4th chapter of the 1st book of Maccabees.

My Lord, Very Rev. Fathers, and dearest faithful in Christ—We are not witness of the sad condition of things presented to the gaze of Judas Maccabeus and his followers when they went up Mount Sion. We see not "the sanctuary desolate, the altar profaned, the gates burnt," nor do forest shrubs grow in the holy place, as was seen in the courts of the Temple. Yet the ceremonial that is to mark this day, containing promise of a speedy change from the simplicity of this old church to a worthier thing that is to be, suggests thought on past trial and present peace which may well inspire thankfulness to God's benign Providence. Our religion is a heritage from ancient days. Time was when it so dominated this island and so ordered its people towards the Most High God that "Isle of Saints" was the proud title whereby the nations named her. Temples for Divine worship then studded the land. To build a Church, to embellish and endow a Church, was the highest ambition of Chieftain and Royal Prince. He on whom Providence had poured riches would make befitting retribution by raising up a noble Temple in which honour should be tendered unto Him. He who bore illustrious name illumined by record of brilliant achievements in peace or war would perpetuate it with enhanced splendour by quartering his armorial bearings on the façade of some

noble pile that sent its towers and minarets heavenward, and seemed with silent pleading to bespeak God's benediction on its faithful founder. To ancient prince in Ireland, for all his warlike roughness and fiery spirit, 'twas sweet enjoyment to alight at the porch of God's House, doff his helmet, and having taken the blessed water and signed him with the saving sign of Redemption, to enter the holy place, tread its stately nave, and before the consecrated altar make his humble prayer, and then assist at the dread mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

'Twas then that in the neighbouring town of Buttevant the Lord of Barrymore built the grand old abbey whose ruins to-day suggest prayer and Heaven and God. In Adare, whither charms of nature attract the tourist, and sacred associations the man of faith, the princely house of Geraldine made a beautiful sanctuary of peace and prayer and psalmody for the gentle monks. On Cashel's Rock the great heart and strong hand of Cormac, Bishop and King, set up in towering magnificence the stately pile which even in our day ranks among the noblest monuments of Christian zeal this sainted isle can boast. What a spectacle did Erin then exhibit! Magnificent storehouses of grace studded the land. With the fullness of holy light she shone before earth and Heaven. From her capital city on the eastern shore to sea-beat Arran in the west—from Bangor to Lismore—in old Clonfert, in peaceful Glendalough, in sweet Innisfallen—what glorious expression of faith was seen! Hundreds of Cistercian monks in forty-two Cistercian monasteries sent forth upon the midnight air the chorus of jubilant worship. In forty-three priories the white-robed sons of Dominic sang prayerful homage to God in the night watches, and dealt out Heaven's grace to men in the daytime. Sixty-five convents of Franciscans brought as graceful ornament to Celtic holiness the joyful simplicity of the Seraph of Assisi. Canons Regular of St Augustine, with venerable rule from their glorious master, in two hundred and thirty-one monasteries, some high placed on mountain-side, some nestling in peaceful dale of emerald green, some on verdant river-banks, sent forth unceasing their tuneful melody of

Divine praise. 'Twas of those good old times the beautiful fancy was formed by some glowing soul that the angels in Heaven oft laid down their harps, flew out through the pearl gates, swooped from the sky, and, seated on the clouds that overhung this isle of the ocean, listened to the music of her monastery choirs and of the saintly fervour of her people.

But alas! our fair peace was too blessed a thing for the hate of the Evil One. A day came when the sun rose up in the eastern sky to shine upon the smoking ruins of Ireland's holy fanes. Iniquity, armed with impressive power—iniquity, helmeted and mailed—iniquity, robed in imperial strength, with command of formidable army, uprose in sacrilegious rebellion against the Lord and against His Christ. A king befouled by service of degrading passions; a wicked queen, born of his sin, aimed at destroying the religion of Jesus Christ by destroying the keystone of the arch, the divinely given teaching and governing authority of the Sovereign Pope of Rome. The spirit of heresy, strong in the arm of the flesh, drew the sword and demanded of Ireland that she should join in heretical alliance and forswear her allegiance to God's vicar on earth. In that hour of fateful import our motherland, weak in human resource, overshadowed by formidable foe, looked on the chains, the dungeon, the cross they offered her; then, all the grace of the sainted centuries filling her heart with loyalty to faith and righteousness, she turned her tearful eyes to Rome—she placed her hands in the hands of Rome, and said—"With thee I stand or fall!" She fell, bruised, mangled, bleeding, crucified with her Divine Master and Model. Then were her sanctuaries made desolate, her altars profaned. The consecrated tables whereon for ages the solemn mysteries had been performed were broken and scattered; the hallowed walls, which had for centuries enclosed the servants of the Most High for purposes of prayer and sacrifice, were ruthlessly thrown down; the shrines where ethereal peace had been tasted by thousands of faithful ones, where in the fresh light of morning, in the splendour of the noonday, in the evening's purple

glow the homage of men had ascended, and the blessing of God had come down—those time-honoured shrines were shattered and ruined. Loving souls, well used to feasting on the Lord's Presence in the Tabernacle, then mourned like Magdalene when they had taken away her Lord, and she knew not where they had laid Him. In Ireland of that day the foxes had holes and the birds of the air their nests, but God Incarnate was driven away from the land by the enemies of His Sacred Truth. His consecrated Temples were no more. Clinging to their Holy Creed, the people would practise, even amid the reign of terror, its solemn sacrificial rite; and any spot on hill or dale where brief secrecy could be had was availed of for the offering up of the Great Sacrifice.

As time went on they dared to erect in some regions edifices of meagre dimensions and modest state wherein the out-lawed priest made oblation of the Divine Victim, and fed the persecuted people with the Body of the Lord. "Mass-houses" they came to be called, and zealous were the vigilant efforts of the hired servants of the Wicked one to discover the faithful assembled therein for the solemn act of worship. What manner of edifice the "Mass-house" was we learn from a communication addressed early in the last century to the viceroy of the day by the man whom Protestants called Bishop of Cloyne. Command had been issued to the leaders of heresy to report to the civil authorities, whom they recognised as rulers of their Church, on the State of Popery. Governing the Protestant Diocese of Cloyne at the time was one Henry Maule. In his report dated 14th December, 1731, we find brief but significant description of the places where our forefathers worshipped the Most High. "These Mass-houses," he wrote of those that existed within this diocese, "are generally mean thatched cabins!" Mean thatched cabins though they were, districts were found in which the terrorising ruin wrought by the persecutor was so complete that the oppressed people had not even the humble Mass-house in which to worship. Among these desolate regions was this very town of Charleville and large part of the adjacent country.

In the year 1728, the Charleville Catholics determined to erect a Mass-house. Though the building was to be of modest dimensions, it was deemed a daring thing on the people's part to resolve on its erection. And the boldness of the enterprise was enhanced by a circumstance recorded by the same heretical bishop; they attempted the insolent deed of erecting it within view of the Protestant Church of the town! Fortunately for the peace of mind of the viceroy to whom the report was forwarded, it contained the pleasing statement that the vigorous action of the local magistracy prevented the execution of the people's impudent design. Behold, men of Charleville and you, my lord, a son of this good old town—behold the condition of your fathers in that evil day. No House for God in the town; no House for God's true worship; no altar with Jesus, the sweet Redeemer, dwelling on it, before Whom the poor, the afflicted, and the tempted might kneel to receive consolation from His Sacred Heart; no beautiful image of Mary, our Queen, with sweet face to encourage needy sinners to pour out trustful petitions unto her; no Stations of the Cross to preach with silent eloquence the evil of sin and the worth of souls and the loving mercy of the Most High. Truly, they were dark and evil days, like unto those of the chosen people before their deliverance by Maccabeus, when they "rent their garments and made great lamentation and put ashes on their heads, and fell down to the ground on their faces and cried towards Heaven." But, blest be the Lord! a change came. Triumphant exercise of brute hate could not endure. Providence, taking pitiful thought for His afflicted people, raised up champions wise and bold, whose moral striving broke, to large extent, the nation's chains. To-day the heirs of the nefarious persecutors' Creed and stolen possessions make recognition of truth and right by seeking to call in question much of the narrative of that age of blood and iron.

"Our enemies are discomfited." Wherefore, in the spirit of Judas Maccabeus, the faithful of this land have begun to "cleanse the holy places and to repair them." You here in Charleville will now build your Mass-house. And

no " mean thatched cabin " shall it be. On ample sight its deep foundations have been laid; the strong grasp of the structure on mother earth has been provided for. On this joyful day the Church's Prelate shall bless, with rite ordained of ecclesiastical authority, the Corner-Stone, symbol of Jesus Christ, Corner-Stone of the mystic edifice that makes the dwelling of God's people on earth. After this initial ceremony, this casting, as it were, of the seed, there shall be seen, with advance of the opening autumn season, the growth of solid walls, not concealed, as in the days of tribulation, but high in air they shall presume to display themselves for all the world to gaze upon. For testimonies of the strong, living God, columns shall spring from the ground in beauteous strength. Having taken their places like sentinels in serried ranks, they and the massive walls shall hold above the holy place the overshadowing roof, which shall be, as the wings of the cherubim of old, a sheltering providence over the Sanctuary of the Most High. Then shall enter the spirit of refined art to garnish the building destined for sublime religious purpose. At the bidding of your faith and zeal they shall carve the hard stone into graceful angels, who shall look down upon you with ethereal smile—assurance of Heaven's benign love. The bright glory of the sunbeam shall not be permitted to enter until, in its passage through each fair window, it shall have shaped itself into images of the canonised heroes of God's Kingdom.

But, greater and better thing than all material worth and beauty shall be in the building formally begun to-day. Edifice of material splendour anyone may erect. Even they whose creed is false can build walls of shining marble, and break their lines with pearl gates. They can deck the stately building with crystal vases, and make it resplendent with brightest colouring. They can produce, by lavish expenditure of money and toil and art, a sight that may feast the senses with its teeming wealth of loveliness. But, worthier thing, higher thing than all this shall be in the Church which you are about to erect. Builder's work and decorator's work completed, the chief pastor will come again, and having cast round its walls the blessed water, and

prayed and signed many times the sign of Redemption upon it, he shall in your name offer your new-built House to the Most High, and it shall be thenceforth the Church of God. Straightway there shall be performed in that freshly dedicated Church the august rite for which chiefly it has been designed—the Holy Mass shall be solemnised. At sound of bell, the congregated faithful shall bow down, for they shall recognise the herald of the coming of the Great King. The priest shall utter over bread and wine the words of transubstantiating power, and down from His Heavenly Glory shall come the Eternal Son of God to make His abode in His new Home. Thenceforth, dearest brethren, greater than Solomon's Temple shall be yours, for Heaven's own Supreme Lord shall sojourn within it. He dwells not in proudest structure raised up in this land for heretical worship. When in the dark ages of persecution they crushed the Lord's people they drove the Lord Himself from His Temple. Let them build unto dimensions and with splendour surpassing all the world ever saw—it shall be but cold body which mere sense can estimate. The soul, the warming life of the Christian Church, is the Divine Master Himself, Who abides therein. And He shall come to stay for ever. While priest of the one true Church shall be there to consecrate the sacramental elements, He shall abide with you and your children and your children's children. He shall be there at the hour of solemn worship, when multitudes shall kneel before Him and choirs shall sing his high-sounding praise; just as really shall He be there in the tranquil time when profound silence shall reign in the holy place and some simple worshipper shall whisper humble petition unto Him. Saint and sinner may approach unto Him and speak their adoration, their thanksgiving, their earnest supplication. In your new Church, His Sacred Heart shall be open by night and day to pour forth multiform grace to all needy souls that shall come unto Him. Not all combined created power, not all the piled-up wealth of nations, not all the strength of armed hosts, not all the boasted skill of sages can give the good things that shall be given within the Temple of the Lord which you have resolved to erect. There shall be had

strength for the tempted, consolation for the afflicted, pardon for the offending sinner, sacramental graces, which are a Divine resource for the varied needs of human souls.

These blessings our good Lord gave to your brave forefathers in the Mass-house of the penal days. The same He has bestowed for the past almost ninety years in this old Church. Though unpretentious its appearance, He disdained not to make it the theatre of His benefactions unto you and dear ones who are gone. Within these old walls most of you were born again of water and the Holy Ghost, Christ's plentiful redemption given to you in tender infancy; many amongst you have oft had His Precious Blood distilled upon you here for the cancelling of your sins: with all its modest simplicity it has been the banquet-hall wherein over and over you have eaten the Bread of Life: from this altar has been dealt to you and generations before you the Saving Word of Gospel truth, and on that sacrificial table has the Divine Victim, mystically immolated, oft brought deliverance unto the souls of your dear departed ones. Nor has this old house lost, by action of time, its sacred character, nor the spell been broken whereby it brought heavenly gifts to you. The Lord would have gone on blessing you here—baptising here, pardoning here, feeding, enlightening, consoling here; you could be still saved and sanctified here. But your faith and reverent instinct is not content with this ancient simplicity. Seeing that He comes down each morning in the sublime mysteries to seat Himself here and dispense His favours, you have resolved that the throne whereon He shall sit shall be more ornate than heretofore, and the garment that shall robe Him less unworthy His Sacred Majesty. Lay down, then, people of Charleville, to-day in thankful joy the corner-stone of God's new Temple; place stone upon stone of its walls, and bind them together for long endurance! Be there on the festive day of its dedication to make it over to the service of the great Creator. And—that I may speak to you the angel's message to the generous patriarch in the Old Dispensation—because you have done this thing, because you have set your hands to this noble

work, and are minded to spare not your worldly goods for God's glory—may Heaven multiply its benedictions upon you. With the coming of the new Church, may there be revival of the "good things of God's House" upon you all. May the graces dealt out in this old edifice never be lost, but fructify unto abundant salvation for all who received them; may the gifts He shall bestow on those who shall render service to Him in His new Temple keep them secure from every ill. And if, during the years in which this venerable Temple served the spiritual needs of the parish, there was innocence, fear of the Lord, loyalty to God and His Church among you, may the strongest grace of Heaven be with you to prevent the melancholy thing that with new and splendid Church there should be a decadence of the Christian spirit, a cooling in the Divine service. May God, Great and Good, effect that the old generation that fulfilled its vow to Him in this modest structure, and the young who shall worship Him in the new, may praise Him together in the Temple of His everlasting glory.

A DESTROYING ANGEL.

Appeal on Behalf of St Mary Magdalene's Asylum, Peacock Lane, Cork. Preached in the Cathedral of that City, 1*st February*, 1899.

"To what shall I compare thee, or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? For great as the sea is thy destruction. Who shall heal thee?" (Lam. ii. 13). This plaint, dearest brethren, is found where we should most readily seek it—in the Lamentations of Jeremias. It was elicited from the prophet by the sad state of the fallen people of God. The glory of the race had departed; an enemy's power had laid strong, cruel hands upon them, and held them in humiliating bondage. Women sighed; saints uplifted their hands and prayed; stalwart youth yearned to draw the sword and strike a blow for the nation's deliverance. The visitation of sorrow was heavy upon them, and 'twas their daily occupation to sit by the rivers of Babylon and weep. The tribulation of the ancient people has passed; their glory, too. But I bespeak your thought for a daughter of Sion who lives and moves in the actual present; for one who is fallen, held in bonds—her destruction great as the sea.

In a city of this southern province of Ireland, a little more than a score of years since, a child was born. Ere many days of her life had passed, they wrapped the tiny form in warm covering and brought her to the House of God. A priest was there invested with power from on High. He took in his hand the simple element—water; invoked the Adorable Trinity, and poured the water upon the child's head. Lo! Divine Omnipotence was moved—Baptism's mysterious spell came upon the little creature. The cloud of sin that had hovered over it was uplifted; beauteous grace shone upon it, and the serene sunbeam of

God's own smile—nay, God Himself, All-perfect and All-holy, came down and entered in to dwell in the young soul. At the other extremity of the sacred edifice was the altar whereon the hidden God was enthroned. Encircling His Tabernacle were shining angels, the King's guard of honour, adoring Him, loving Him, feasting on Him. My fancy sees them suddenly check their ecstatic fluttering round the Master's throne. They perceive the interested gaze of His sacred heart directed towards the baptismal font. Following His glance down the nave of the holy place they ask with gladsome thrill—"Who is she that cometh up from the waters, overflowing with delights?" Discerning with angelic vision the Monarch of Heaven within the child's regenerate soul, down they swooped to where the humble godmother held the little thing in her arms, and, all unseen by mortal eyes of priest and surrounding people, in angels' fashion they tendered reverent salutation. Forth from the holy place the nurse brought her tiny charge, and—may we not think it?—after her, and at right hand and left and all around, went beautiful angels in winged procession to escort the precious thing with heavenly serenade to the parental home. No costly furs, nor shining silks, nor rich embroidered stuffs were the infant's raiments. She was clad in the humble garb of the children of the poor, and, lest the cold blast should hurt, the nurse wrapped round her her simple shawl. But, to the estimate of the invisible spirits accompanying, not Solomon in all his glory was robed so fair as she. As they bore the Christian babe to her home they passed a carriage resplendent with rich adornments—seated in the carriage the magnificently dressed wife of one of the city's wealthy merchants. Impressively grand to the human onlookers was the finely robed lady, but to the angels' eyes poor and mean compared with the glorious thing of supernatural worth wrapped in the simple woman's shawl. They passed a jeweller's shop, where sparkling diamonds flashed back the sunlight; their resplendent glare was dull beside the effulgence of grace in the newly baptised soul. To the modest home she was brought, and the poor mother, with faith to guide her instinct and govern her feelings,

joyfully blest Heaven for that her child was now God's child. Before reason's dawn came to her the family transferred their home to this city of Cork. As the years went by the little girl's pale face gave promise of bodily enfeeblement; many a time was anxious look on the loving mother's face, and whispered apprehensions were made to the father. But the Christian man, having religious enlightenment, replied: "Be it so! God is our strength; though her body is frail, she has the sustaining power of God's Sacrament in her soul!" Cloud of poverty lowered over the little household; in winter's pitiless storms scant and ill-conditioned was the clothing of the little maiden, and message of hunger often came from the pale face. The Christian father's thought was still that which faith prompted: "If the Lord wills it—blessed be His Holy Name! My hungry child has health and strength in her soul at least, and she feeds regularly on the Bread of Angels, the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ! Wherefore, blow all ye winds of tribulation! Though she should walk in the midst of the shadow of death we shall fear no evils, because Thou, all-sufficing God, art with her!" Truly all-sufficing. All-sufficing He shall be by and by when possessed in the glorious kingdom, with guarantee of eternal possession. All-sufficing now to the soul that possesses Him by grace. Know it, dearly beloved; feel it and be it well remembered—life's supreme good is the Lord's holy grace. Supreme good in this, that all good of other sort is less; supreme good in this, it is the good which countervails against every ill and all ills, making them be as though they were not, or, by process of spiritual alchemy, changing them into the very component elements of the transcendent good itself. 'Twas so felt by the ancient prophet—"Place me beside Thee, O Lord, and let any man's hand fight against me!" 'Twas set down in His inspired message to the Romans by the great Apostle —he reckoned all prized things of this world as vile filth that he might gain Christ, and be found in His holy grace. Like mind was in the glorious Ignatius of Loyola who prayed: "O Lord, give me Thy grace and Thy love. Keep all besides!"

That was the treasure which the poor but religious man saw in his growing daughter, and holy pride and joy he felt for that in the rich endowment of the soul she possessed the God-given title to Heaven's unending bliss. But after sixteen summer suns had beamed upon her, there came a day when somebody gave her things to read—things which we priests, solicitous for the safe-guarding of young females, call light reading. The girl's mind received a strange guest in the shape of thoughts that withdrew her interest from the pious subjects which had been her chief pleasure. Her relish for prayer diminished. Her week-day Mass became an intermittent exercise. Heaven's lights and aids came in less plenteous measure than before. The Evil One, ambitioning her destruction, plied his temptations. Bad passions, melancholy inheritance from Adam and Eve to all our race, operated within; alluring dangers presented themselves without. The God-fearing and fervent girl became careless; the careless girl became disedifying bold; the bold one, with sinful confidence in her own wisdom and strength, and with flippant rejection of charitable monition, went wilfully to meet temptation—and into what had been the Master's preserve, into the once sunlit, blooming garden of her soul came the pestilential blight of deadly sin; she lost the friendship of God. Down from high Heaven He came on her baptismal day, and with regal train of blessings He entered her heart. She has driven Him forth, and it is the demon foul that now sits enthroned within her. Her lips, well practised in days gone by to speak to God and His holy Mother, now deal out the poison of unclean speech. The Hallowed Name of Jesus, which, ten years before, kneeling beside her father at that altar, she was wont to utter in reverent love, with head bowed down and heart aglow, she now shrieks out on the midnight air when combined drunkenness and lust have made her the faithful servant and active agent of Hell's king, Lucifer. Oh! daughter of Sion—to what shall I compare thee? Contemplating thee as thou wert twenty years ago, when in thy native city thou wert raised up from the waters of baptismal regeneration, with the ethereal beauty of sanctifying grace upon thy fresh young soul,

I compare thee to an angel, bright and fair, who bathes his golden wings in the beams that issue from the splendours of the Godhead. Seeing thee as thou art now, I liken thee —to an angel? Yes—to that angel who on a dread night long, long ago, bore down from the dark sky on Egypt's cities and plains and brought bitter woe into every household.

You have heard, brethren, of the Egyptian plagues. Nine times was the hand of the Lord uplifted against Egypt, that held His chosen people in bondage, and nine times was the heart of the Egyptian king moved, indeed, for a space, but quickly hardened again. And the Lord said to Moses: "Yet one plague more will I bring upon Pharaoh and Egypt." And at midnight the Lord sent a destroying angel through the land, and every first-born of Egypt he smote and slew, "from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on the throne to the first-born of the captive woman that was in the prison." And Pharaoh arose in the night and all Egypt, and there arose a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house wherein there lay not one dead. What fancy can picture that night of woe? The day had closed upon the land in secure peace. Father and mother, yet in the early years of conjugal bliss, when close of day came, looked fondly on their sleeping babe; brushed aside, with touch of gentle love, his waving ringlets and kissed "good night" upon his rosy cheek. The aged pair, weak and tottering, lay down their feeble limbs for the night's repose, but first blest their lucky fate for that strong and comely and faithful to them was the son on whose dutiful love and sinewy arms they could rest as on trusty staff of life. The bright young girl who in the sunny hours of the happy day had played with her brother, bade him fond adieu when the long shadows had faded and night closed around. Egypt slept in peace. Heaven's gate was flung open; out rushed an angel with his Master's anger on his noble face and sword of his Master's wrath in his right hand. Towards the doomed region he winged his flight, and at soundless midnight he sped on his errand of vengeance and smote each first-born throughout the land. "And Pharaoh arose in the night and all Egypt." Electric

current of terror went through every household. The youthful parents looked upon their tender babe: his cheeks had lost their rosy hue; his eyes that had softly closed in sweet sleep were open wide in glassy stare; the face was distorted into expression of agonising terror—he was dead. The aged couple sprang from their couch with vigour of haste when the shriek of the dread visitation rang through the house; they found the robust youth on whom their love and hope had centred a helpless corpse upon his bed. The bright young girl leaped from her sleeping cot in dazed alarm; the fresh simplicity of her tender years left her, and she seemed to pass into mature age before her time when she saw the loved brother with whom but a few hours before she had happily frolicked, lying cold, rigid, dead and disfigured before her. At first shock one household, seeing its loved one dead, would fain communicate its tale of sorrow to neighbours, and seek the solace of kindly sympathy. But soon they learned that a like scene of sorrow was in the neighbour's house, and so in the next and in the next, and through all the land. Oh! that dismal night in Egypt! Death in every house! Black sorrow in every house! Beneath every roof-tree man's deep grief, woman's loud lament, children's affrighted pangs when the mighty angel spirit had gone with Heaven's raging vengeance and smitten the stiff-necked people. Brethren, like to that destroying angel is the woman of sin. In the dead hour of night she issues forth. Through the silent streets she walks with purpose of hellish destruction. The power of evil in her heart working on the doleful infirmity of our fallen nature, she seeks out, smites and slays many a first-born amongst the people. "From the first-born of Pharaoh who sat upon his throne to the first-born of the captive woman that was in the prison"—from those in high station to the humble sons of toil—the murderous sword of her wicked personality and her wicked allurement kills, by the death that leads to eternal death. When smiling morn comes and God's serene sun shines upon the city again, weeping guardian spirits see lying around the robbed and murdered souls that have crossed the path of this angel of perdition. As time rolls on, louder grows the

dismal chorus of the tortured in nether Hell for the added voices which this young woman's ways contribute to the army of the reprobate. Oh! daughter of Jerusalem, great as the sea is thy destruction. Dead in soul—more than dead—for as body that is dead and has passed from death to putrefaction—thou art carrion dead—dead thyself, and, by thy pestilential influence, dealing death to others.

Oh, bad woman—bad woman—who shall heal thee? Ye Christian men and women that surround me—who shall check the ravages of this baneful thing? Who shall arrest this angel of death in her destroying mission? Who shall uplift this fallen being, and restore unto her the lost heritage of grace? When on that memorable night in Egypt the white-winged messenger of Divine wrath swept over the land, dealing death and sorrow, he was checked when over the porch of Hebrew households he saw the sign of blood, the sprinkled blood of the paschal lamb appointed by the Most High for token of Heaven's protective decree. The Lamb—the Lamb without spot—He Whose blood was shed to save; He and only He can heal the great evil that is in the soul of the woman of sin. No sympathetic fellow-mortal can do it; no tender-hearted, devoted nun can do it; no zealous priest can do it; to God must the fallen one look up; to Him her heart must turn if the dread calamity that has befallen her is to be undone. Repentant grace is God's gift. 'Tis the spirit of the Most High, which in the world's creating moved over unlovely chaos and produced beauteous order, that must breathe into the poor soul of the disordered woman, and re-create the honour and enrichment and beauty of her childhood's grace. Wherefore unto God is the appeal of the fallen soul. But God appeals to you. For this lost creature sin means food, raiment, shelter. When she and others of her kind shall hear the Divine call and rise up to follow it, they shall renounce bodily sustenance. God speaks the call; pours down converting grace, for converting grace He has reserved unto Himself, and in His Divine heart is it stored. But that which shall feed her body, that which shall clothe her, that which shall afford her shelter and repose—bread, butter, meat, for food; wool, flannel, and all textures that warm the limbs

by day and night; brick and mortar, all His material goods, He has bestowed upon us that we steward them wisely. He wants a portion of them for the needs of His lost child when she shall come back in tears to His feet. Eternal illumination and holy emotion given us in the sweet Sacrament of the Eucharist and in the holy Mass come from God; but the bread and wine must be supplied by men. Similarly is there a sharing with us by the Divine Master of the operation of rescuing and uplifting His fallen creature.

Therefore, dearest brethren, my speech to you to-day is but the delivery unto your ears and hearts of God's petition for your aid unto Himself in His work of mercy. And I may fittingly suggest to the common sense and the business-like spirit of the congregation a brief reflection on the immense weight of the charge which the Sisters of Charity in that Magdalene Asylum of Peacock Lane have assumed. To house, feed, clothe and care a woman for a year; to house, feed, clothe and care a dozen women for a year; to house and sustain and make all humane provision for the wants of fifty women—a hundred women —more than a hundred women—for each one of the three hundred and sixty-five days—my dear brethren, the brave nuns who, for God's honour, have committed themselves to the doing of that degree of benefaction, have good right to ask a priest to stand in a pulpit on some Sabbath morning, and call on all the Christian people for God's honour to give them cordial assistance in their noble enterprise. Nor let any man seek dispensation from the collector's pleading, dispensation from the rebuke of his own better feelings, by saying, "Is there not a laundry? Do not these women support themselves by their labour?" They do not. They did not under the more favourable conditions of former times. How can they do it now with two large new laundries opened in the city? Besides, there are the aged women who cannot work; there is the percentage of poor creatures whose sinful past has left them incapable of work; there are the women, most interesting of all to those who are fond of our Lord Jesus Christ, those who are tempted to go back to their awful wickedness, and who, for the week or fortnight

during which their fickle, and dark, and obstinate moods last, fold their arms and refuse to work. After all the earnings of the women's most industrious toiling, there is large want in the asylum's exchequer, and the largest collection that ever followed the most eloquent charity sermon supplies but small portion of that want.

Brethren, answer generously to-day this call of the Most High. And I have warrant to assure you of this—God shall be no man's debtor. He has said it, and His Truth, as well as His Mercy, remaineth for ever. He will repay you. Lift up the fallen: He will keep you and those dear to you from falling. Do something to save a soul: He will safeguard your soul. You know not now where you shall be in eternity; we are all in the dread balance; but this know you—your doing well what the Lord asks of you here to-day will render more probable your unending bliss in Heaven.

THE CHURCH—THE ARK OF SALVATION.

PREACHED IN ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, GLASGOW,
22nd October, 1899.

"And God destroyed all the substance that was upon the earth, from man even to beast and the creeping things and fowls of the air; . . . and Noah only remained, and they that were with him in the ark" (Gen. vii. 23).

WHEN at sound of pealing bell from church tower we assemble in the holy place for religious worship, the interest that moves us, brethren, is the most solemn of all interests. The years fly past; we are nearing the close of life. We who are young are young no more. We move ever onward, and as time advances we occupy places left vacant by the aged as they drop away. Ere long we, too, shall disappear, and generations yet unborn shall tread the streets we now tread, and do the work wherein we are now engaged. The majority of Adam's race is in another world. None come back to this world; they stay in that other life for ever. Thither we, too, shall go, never to return. What, then, shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he suffer loss of his immortal soul? Who will be unmindful of his soul? Who will tolerate danger for his soul? Who will not render thankful praise to the Most High for those favours of the Divine bounty which lead to eternal good for the soul?

I bespeak your reverent thought to-night, brethren, for that signal gift of our Heavenly Father, the true faith, membership of the One True Church.

When we call the Church the Ark of Salvation we give her a name which suggests the claim the Most High has on our worshipful thanksgiving for having drawn us into her fold. We have heard tell of the first ark: it was an Ark of Salvation—salvation from destroying deluge. In

ancient days God, angered by man's iniquity, sent the deluge. At the Lord's bidding, and according to His design, an ark was constructed. His faithful ones were commanded to enter the ark if they would be saved. They obeyed the Divine mandate, and were preserved; those without the ark were lost in the flood, the avenger of God's justice.

Study, brethren, the parallel between that episode in the world's history and mankind's moral condition and history. Destroying deluge, in spiritual sense, threatens the human race. To save from the threatened destruction there is a Divinely built Ark. That Ark is the Catholic Church. Deluge there surely is, ever tending to overwhelm souls. Man's own heart tends to ruin him. Stored within him he has strong evil passions, melancholy inheritance from the first pair. When with reason's dawn the age of responsibility commences man is conscious of something within himself which moves towards transgression of the ordinances of God. Enemies of God, and enemies of his own self have a stronghold within him, and there is deadly peril from their pernicious tendencies. Without, the great wave of the world's wicked spirit and customs threaten his soul's security. "Flood of human custom," asked St Augustine, "who shall resist thee?" The evil leaven in individual man, urging him to wrongdoing, enters into alliance with like evil in his fellowman; contributions of evil from each one of a multitude form into mass of evil; the accepted influence of this evil force suggests a standard of evil, a principle of evil, whereby multitudes would fain be ruled. Many men, using not the means of grace which would make them victorious combatants against this evil power, become its blind slaves; then its blind agents, preachers of its doctrine, mouthpieces which promulgate its unholy authority, pleaders for submission unto it—they constitute the "world" in the evil sense of the name. The spirit whereby they are governed has been called by Jesus Christ His deadly enemy. That world, enemy of man, enemy of God, cursed of God, is all round us—is beside us, ever canvassing our soul's ruin—a veritable flood of most

destructive power. Moreover, since the Fall man is blind. Ignorance has followed on the primal rebellion. We are ignorant in spiritual sense; we perceive not the things of God. Because of the feeble light within us, the waves of evil passion beat upon us with enhanced force. This perilous condition of human life Holy Scripture expresses in various and emphatic forms. St Paul confessed it in his declaration: "I have a law in my members fighting against the law of my mind"; and in his plaint: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" As sheep in the midst of wolves did the Divine Master say He sent His disciples, indicating that the servants of God are frail things buffeted by the waves of a moral deluge.

Our peril is greater because of the requirements of the Christian religion. Exalted standard has been set up for us; sublime truths revealed for our bounden acceptance; a strict law enacted for our guidance, and a moral tone transcending that of ancient times. The pride of the human intellect loves not simple faith in Christian dogmas: that pride of human intellect, joined with perverse element in the human heart, chafes beneath the Gospel yoke, and thus the service of God demanded in the Christian dispensation is unwelcome to the natural man. The difficulty of salvation arising from aversion to prescribed faith and morals, added to the obstacles set in our way by the world around us, and plotting fallen angels beneath us, render us in our actual condition like to men whose dwellings, possessions, and lives a roaring flood threatens.

For imperilled mankind the merciful Redeemer has built an Ark—His Church. Having achieved the redemption of humanity, He created a Church through which His redeeming grace should reach individual souls. It is the belief of all Christian minds—through the religion Jesus Christ founded, through life made to accord therewith, must we share the redemption He wrought, and be destroyed from the destroying flood of sin. That religion is in His Church, is perpetuated in His Church. That religion, in the concrete, is His Church; Christianity is the Church of Christ; the Church of Christ is Christianity;

through Christianity is the world saved—all which is to say, the Church is the Ark of Salvation. "Go," said the Divine Master, "preach the Gospel to every creature"; which means, "Announce My religion everywhere." He added: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved—he that believeth not shall be condemned"; which means, "He that shall accept My religion and live by it, only he shall be saved."

How grave, then, is the question, Where is the Church of Christ? Where is the Ark of Salvation? Let the myriad questions discussed amongst men be hushed when this question claims our thought: Where is the Church of the living God, the Ark of Salvation? He Who has plumbed the depths of the soul's eternal loss and measured the height of Heaven's unending bliss—He has weighed the portentous gravity of the query. How serious a concern in the days of Noah was discovery of the saving ark and admission thereunto! When in the midnight hour the swelling waves gave out dismal moan; when the breath of the Lord's wrath swept over them, uplifting them into awful anger, and ocean's booming thunder seemed as the voice of the great Creator's outraged justice, and the waters, rearing themselves into mountains, flung their huge mass upon the habitations of men, while down poured the dread cataracts of Heaven—in the terror of that day, what fevered yearning was in the breasts of men to find some saving shelter! How must not the wretched ones, tossed about in the wild tragedy of the deluge, as they saw the ark serenely riding the waves, have appealed to those housed within to open its portal and admit them to blessed security! And if the favoured ones within could behold the scenes of terror and death around—the multitudes of all ages and conditions, the strong man and the fair maid, rich and poor, the man of patriarchal years and the tender babe—all tossed upon the angry waves—now submerged, now rising for a time to the surface, gasping, shrieking, praying, blaspheming, then sinking to rise no more—how deep and vivid their gratitude to the kind Providence that had so privileged them! When chariots and horsemen, man and beast, commercial mart

and stately palace—the proud works of man on all sides—were engulfed, and they sailing the crest of the waves in peace—what stirring of deepest feeling and fervid outburst of prayerful thanksgiving must have been theirs!

But, brethren, they who sailed in the ark of Noah have followed the myriads engulfed in the deluge around them; they, too, have been long since overtaken by death. The deluge destroyed the body's life; that ark preserved the body's life—for a time! And is it not written, "Be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. Fear ye Him Who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell"? The moral deluge, thought of which concerns us in this holy place, inflicts death of soul, and death of soul is death and pain eternal.

Where, then, is the Ark in which souls are to be saved? It has been taught, brethren, that all they who truly seek it shall surely find it. May not one say—the finding is easy? Antecedent reasoning tells to some extent what the true Church must be. The sacred page records what the Son of God actually made her. Reason tells us that *the Church is one*. Before it was established, or the form of it indicated, were it said to an intelligent schoolboy in Jerusalem—This Great Preacher and Wonder-worker intends to found a Church, an organised society for teaching mankind His doctrine, and leading souls till the end of ages into the salvation He is about to win for them: tell us, good youth, how many such societies will He establish? the youth's boyish reason would make reply: There can be but one society set up by Jesus Christ. Wherefore two or more? Answering that query the boy's reason were right reason. The Lord is one; His truth is one; the redeeming grace He purchased is one; the eternal reward He has destined for Adam's race one; the condition of man's moral living which fits for eternal life one—one His Church must be. No cause was given for surprise, therefore, when they heard Him say: "I will build My Church"—not "My Churches." "If he will not hear thee, tell the Church." Nor did St Paul tax the credulity of the faith-

ful at Rome when he wrote: "As in one body we have many members . . . so we, being many, are one body in Christ." Striking is that prayer of our Lord to His Father before His passion: "Father, keep them"—His followers—"keep them in Thy Name that they may be one"; and He went on to pray for His followers in all the coming ages, "that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one." One Church did God make, not merely in the sense that, founding one, He founded no more than one, but one in this sense, that He gave to His Church a special positive character of oneness—oneness being set forth in the Holy Book as a feature of the true Church. She is a "kingdom"—one in sentiment, interests, and government; she is a "flock," a "fold"—one by aggregation and in government; she is a "city," a "body"—and more of like significance.

Where in the human world of yesterday and to-day may men find the Church that is one? Where is the Church that has oneness as a prominent and inseparable quality? Not identity of language is sought, nor similarity of tastes; not uniformity of colour and dress; but the unity which all know the Lord must have intended—unity in religious belief; in substantial religious practice; in government—a vast human aggregation believing the doctrines He delivered; employing the fundamental means of grace He taught; practising the forms of Divine worship He prescribed, and obeying the one authority which He instituted. Where does this unity exist? Fortunately for facility of decision in the momentous question, of all the sects which boast of being Christian, one alone claims to have this unity. May not judgment go "by default" against the rest? 'Tis written on the face of all other sects—we have no oneness. 'Tis written on the face of the Catholic Church—I am one! Mine is the unity which the Divine Founder designed; the unity which the history of His Church's formation tells He really instituted;—one faith; one chief rule of worship; one essential discipline; subjection to one head. From end to end of the wide world what one member of her

fold believes as Christian faith every other believes; and all, learned and simple, prince and peasant, white man and coloured, hold the same doctrine. If one, reciting list of the specific dogmas he adheres to, should express more points of belief than another, think not that he and that other differ in faith; merely in this do they differ—one knows more fully than the other the details of the Church's teaching. If to-day the Church make solemn definition of an article of Creed which she did not authoritatively deliver to her children before, think not that she has changed her faith, or changed her children's faith. She but goes forward in her mission of formally making known the details of faith, and gives to her children larger acquaintance with the specific points of Divine revelation. Her faith to-day was her faith yesterday, and from the beginning; her children's faith, being her faith, is the same in every time and place.

Our Church is one. Our Church alone is one. Look at all the sects: no profession, even, of true Christian unity do they make. More than this—they exhibit lack of unity which were ludicrous were it not so gravely harmful to souls. Cast eyes, ye Christian men and women who recognise the seriousness of the possession of true religion rather than false, of God's blessed heritage rather than Beelzebub's wicked counterfeit—cast eyes on the Protestant Church. Do I hear some among you ask—which of the Protestant Churches? Many we know of. If I select the English Protestant Church, do I not hear from the same questioner—which of the English Protestant Churches? For they are scandalously many. True, there exists a society bearing the name Anglican Church, with recognised hierarchical system, with salaries paid to officials from one source. Oneness of religion it has not. Even decent pretence of oneness of religion it has almost shed in these days of confusion. Seven hundred sects, we are told on grave authority, are now in Great Britain, the fragments into which the Church of the Reformation has been dissolved! It is Babel, the City of Confusion—and it parades itself, to the humiliated ones within, and the pitying ones without, as the City of Confusion—a religion

made by some other than God, Whose work is work of stately order and peace.

Another feature which sacred Scripture sets forth must be before our minds in the search after God's true Church. The true Church must *teach*, and must teach in the sense intended by her Divine Founder. God's Church does not teach as a professor of human art or science teaches. A Church does not teach Christ's doctrine unless she sets it before men's minds as true doctrine, imposing it on their acceptance as Christ's teaching, demanding that they believe it in Christ's name, and asserting in His name that if they believe it not they shall sin and be lost. "Teach all nations" was the Son of God's command, and this was His sanction to back up her teaching—"He that believeth not shall be condemned."

Dearest brethren, our Church—blest be God for the joy of knowing it!—teaches in that true sense of Christian teaching. She speaks the Gospel to the world in God's name; tells the world that He commands her to speak it; that it is on His word men must take it; that they shall incur Divine condemnation if they refuse to believe it. In this real sense of teaching—this teaching which men of intelligence and sincerity must confess to be the only admissible teaching by a Church entrusted with a Divine revelation—what other sect teaches? None! One only Church delivers message from Heaven as message from Heaven should be delivered, with warrant for the insistent teaching of it from God's own command. Look out, brethren, from the windows of our God-built Ark on the wave-tossed millions outside. What does he believe who calls himself Christian, but is not Catholic? He believes what he likes! But, some may plead, he believes the doctrine of Christ. Yes, in a sinister sense; he believes what he likes, and he calls that the doctrine of Christ. Again some may plead: he has the Bible for guide in faith. Time was—a time that quickly passed—when a good man, although enlightened, might not have been assuredly condemned if he held that the Bible could be rule of Christian faith. To-day he who professes it is either not a good man or is unenlightened. Ye men of

honest simplicity all this island over, tell unto yourselves—tell to the children whom you are bound to bring up in the way of truth—who are they that are tossed on the waves of the destroying flood—on the waves of religious confusion; confusion as to points of belief; confusion as to religious authority; confusion as to who shall teach, and whom they shall teach, and what they shall teach; confusion as to who shall command, who shall obey, one party confessing they have no rule, another foolishly, but with less folly than the former folly, proclaiming the rule of Cæsar? This City of Confusion has for foundation the tenet that the Bible is sufficient rule of Christian faith. "Seven hundred sects England alone is reputed to contain, each of whom proves a whole system of theology and morals from the Bible!" So was it written in the London *Times* newspaper on the 13th January, 1884.

Once again, brethren, for the present hour—be it done hundreds of times through your years of life—let us magnify the goodness of the Providence that has placed us within the Ark of Salvation. Oh, glorious Church of God! Blessed unity! Comforting certainty! Well-guaranteed authority! One head over all: a law recognised by all to obey that head! A law not made by king, Lords and Commons of any earthly empire, but made by God, and known to all members of the Church to have come from God! Wherefore, not merely is our rule of faith decided and deciding rule, but our procedure in Divine worship is defined with a clearness and force of authority which gives comfort to every Christian heart. Bishop and priest and deacon and subdeacon and acolyte and bearer of cross and thurible and master of ceremonies—we all know what dress to wear, how many lights we shall use, when we shall sign with the cross, when to bend the knee, when to bend both knees, how we shall hold our hands, and so forth, through varied liturgical offices. Cardinals and patriarchs, bishops, priests, and laymen, learned and simple, king and peer and peasant, cultured European and semi-savage Indian—all, from pole to pole, submit to the voice which, though it issue from a feeble old man imprisoned in Rome, sounds with the majesty of

a heavenly commission on the ear of the entire Christian community. Unity and certainty! Unity of certainty, and certainty of unity! Ignorance of the human mind illumined by the Father of Light! Vacillating human spirit grasped unto sacred discipline by the Omnipotence of Heaven! Hail, holy Church of God!

Brethren, she who blessed our fathers in their generation, and has blessed us, will go on blessing men unto the consummation of ages. The ark of Noah foundered not in the flood; no damage did she suffer from the foaming waves; she rode in serene triumph to the time and place of peace. So shall the bark of the Church, bearing within her the All-powerful God Who made her, withstand all stormy waves of persecution that shall be permitted to buffet her. From the hour in which she was made she has had to bear the ruthless, ceaseless onslaught of all manner of hostile power. Forth from the Apostles' place of concealment went her first Pontiff on the day of the Church's formal inauguration; fired with Pentecostal light and ardour he announced the young Church's message to the people: he was straightway imprisoned! He and his colleagues were slain by evil power, their blood testifying before Heaven and earth their belief in the truth they preached. Soon Rome's all-conquering power flung itself in fanatic zeal upon the Church, resolved to overwhelm it in a sea of blood. Seventeen millions of brave witnesses to the truth of Christian revelation were tortured to death; but when the red wave rolled by, and the brutal tyrant paused to contemplate his triumph, the Church stood before him, living, active, the supernatural vigour wherein she trusted only enhanced by the hostile blows she had received. Since that day the representative of God has ever found astute hate and wicked power compassing her destruction. But the Sacred Ark has sailed triumphantly through all storms.

Within memory of most here was witnessed the latest blow aimed at the Church by a great Imperial Power. The new-made, or restored, German Empire, counselled by a man high in intellectual power, and so formidable in power of grosser kind as to be named " the man of blood

and iron," smote the Church within her realm. There lived then in Germany, and lives still, one famed for scholarship, and inflamed with hate of our religion. He was amongst the chief instigators of the *Kulturkampf*, the war then inaugurated against the Church. Within the last two months that man penned in a learned German publication a review of a Congress of German Catholics held last summer. Hear me, brethren, while I read revelation of the change that has come in that man's thought and feeling: "Not religion," he writes, "is now out of date, but the *Kulturkampf*, and all that belongs to it. Those who took part in that Catholic Congress testified to the unshaken and unshakable hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church. They know that twenty-five years ago the then mightiest State in the world set itself to destroy the organisation of the Church; that for this it made unscrupulous use of all the means within its power, and that the attempt failed before the passive resistance of the Catholic Church. That Church is more ancient, greater, more deeply rooted in the minds of mankind than any modern State with its army." He then treats of the chances of the war of scientific men against the Church, and expresses his view: "I have never doubted that the sanctuary of religion has nothing to fear from the advance of the natural sciences and philosophy." That gentleman had some years ago dealt at considerable length with what he and others regarded as a special alliance between the great order of Jesuits and the reigning Pontiff, Pius IX. In the recent publication from which I have quoted he shows edifying candour: "In my declaration of April 22nd, 1879, I wrote—'This system must, on account of its innate falsehood, destroy the organism of the Catholic Church, and that at no distant date.' I was utterly wrong! . . . Twenty years ago I took part in great meetings full of stormy, alcoholic, ideal enthusiasm, in which the cry—*Rome must and will fall*, found noisy echo. Those enthusiastic champions have shaken the building of the ancient Church no more than little boys shake an ancient cathedral by scratching with their pencils one of the pillars of its massive structure." That writer is but one man; but

he is one whose testimony is of much avail. Famed scholar, once shining light among the influential enemies of the Church, he could pen that which you have heard me read only after vivid conviction of a something in the Church which to him was cause for amaze, but is known to us as result of Heaven's plentiful benediction.

Let us, then, brethren, rejoice in the Lord, and again rejoice—our Holy Church is the Ark of Salvation! And let us again praise the Lord for that we abide within her sheltering roof. But be it remembered that enrolment amongst the children of the Church is but a means to an end. If the unfaithful Catholic, the intemperate Catholic, the quarrelsome Catholic, the Catholic unmindful of his children's Christian training, neglectful of Sacraments—if he on the doomsday be condemned, and the non-Catholic who knows not what he does while adhering with honest mind to falsehood, be saved, what shall right faith profit the reprobate son of the Church? It shall but enhance the severity of his condemnation. Our Christian heritage puts solemn responsibility upon us to live according to our creed, and edify all erring ones around us. Let our light shine before men, that the sincere among them may recognise the sign of Heaven's blessing on our holy Church, and surrender to the call God makes on every man to walk the true path which leads to eternal life.

DIGNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH.

APPEAL MADE IN ST PATRICK'S CHURCH, BELFAST, IN AID OF ST MALACHY'S SCHOOL BUILDING FUND, ON THE *3rd Sunday of Advent*, 1899.

"There hath stood One in the midst of you Whom you know not."

MAY it please your Lordship.—Dearest brethren—The text is from the day's Gospel. There lives one in the midst of you whom you know not. In your homes, seated with you round the winter's fire, climbing your knee, and looking with trustful love into your face; in the public ways, playing in all the innocent wilderness of boyhood, whipping his top, shooting his marbles, chasing his playmates—there is one whom, I dare assert, you know not. You will doubtless say to me—Know him not? From his cradle I have been familiar with him; every inch added to his stature I have watched; his earliest efforts at speech I have listened to; each least movement in his ways and modulation of his voice is known to me. And if I rejoin by questioning you—Who, then, is he? and you reply.—He is my child—do I not well say? You know him not. Brethren, that little creature who lisps his unthought speech to you by the hearth, who sits in proud joy upon your knees, and clasps his arms in love around your neck; he who plays in the city street—shall I tell you who he is? He is the child of God! Aye, for a certainty, child of God! From all eternity God's imperial mind conceived the design of him, and 'twas the power Divine of God's right hand that made him. Ere he had passed many days of life he became God's child in a new and higher sense. For they brought him to the Holy Temple; they held him at the baptismal font; the regenerat-

ing stream was poured upon him; current of Heaven's electric force ran through his spiritual being; the darkness of original sin was dispelled and ethereal sunshine of grace smiled upon him; the bonds wherein Satan held him enslaved were burst, and he sprang into "the liberty of the glory of the children of God." When, at close of the baptismal rite, the nurse folded warm covering round the tiny thing and bore it forth from the holy place, an angel bright and fair flitted beside. He had been bidden to guard the new-made Christian as the veritable child of the Most High. Child of the Most High, do I say? There is more than that. In the hour of baptismal blessing not merely did God exalt this human creature unto the adoption of son, but He Himself, Being of infinite glory and beauty, came down and entered into the young soul to dwell therein for ever! As the newly baptised one was borne from the Lord's Temple to the parental home, well may one fancy the heavenly spirits swooping down from the sky to escort him with reverent and gladsome serenade. And when, with advancing time, the tiny creature began to crawl round the family room, and, passing that stage, commenced his feeble efforts to walk—stumbling, falling, rising again, and struggling up the stairway, to the delighted interest of loving parents—the unseen heavenly witness, paying scant heed to its body's life and growth and movements, looked through the covering of flesh into the soul of the child, folded his wings and bowed him down in solemn adoration, because he recognised within the innocent soul the same Eternal Trinity which he saw enthroned amid the splendours of Heaven. Dearest brethren, gaze upon the child, whilst yet, amid his infant freaks and gambols, the touch of the Redeemer's hand in baptismal grace is upon him, and sin, the despoiler, has not come to undo the work of the Spirit of God. Gaze upon him with spiritual eye. No beauty that delights our bodily sense can compare with that of his unstained soul. No cheering loveliness of smiling morn, no majestic brilliance of noonday, no ravishing glory of the sun at eve, when in purple and gold he sinks into the western sea: all is as naught beside the charm of God's grace within the young

soul. Wide earth in all her vast store of the Creator's works, in all her sparkling flowers, verdant meads and limpid streams, in all her picturesque landscapes, in all her stately fanes, in the tempting beauty of human face, in joyful sunlight, in gentle moonlight, in solemn starlight, in all the dreamy combinations of loveliness which the wildest fancy can conjure up—wide earth can reach not to within a thousand million degrees of the wealth and beauty enshrined within the soul of the Christian child. Wonder not that a beautiful spirit from Heaven walks with him in every time and place, nor disdains the association. Though the little fellow's feet be bare, his raiment poor, his face pale with evidence of gnawing hunger; though repellent deformity have stolen the graceful symmetry from his tender limbs, and loathsome disease eat away the tiny frame, the supernatural faculty of appreciation in the heavenly spirit finds a holy joy in the sight of the blessed young soul. The Lord of Glory, when He trod the earth, saw the worldly minded, the carnal-eyed, unspiritual people, putting back children that He might not be incommoded by them. He put forth His hand and begged they would allow the little ones to come unto Him. Even the Sacred Heart of God-Man rejoiced in the nearness of childhood. Dearest brethren, what saw that eye which sees all—what saw it in innocent children? That which all may see, if they look with faith, in the dear child we are considering. Before that small item of humanity stand in awe, as did Moses before the burning bush. While the guileless face is upturned to yours, be it in fear or with cheerful smile, think that he is a very tabernacle of the living God, and with profoundest reverence adore the Eternal Trinity that dwells within him.

Alas! that ineffable treasure the child can lose. And whereas grace now is destined to be eternal life hereafter, the child forfeiting grace on earth may thereby forfeit his claim to Heaven's bliss. You can find your child now in the warm cot where, mayhaps, you left him slumbering when you came to Church, or amusing himself within doors or without. If you would find him when

millions of ages shall have rolled by you must seek him either amongst the gilded thrones in Heaven or in the dismal prison of Hell. He shall be saved or lost for ever!

Behold the secret of the Church's solicitude for the child. Charged with the furtherance of the eternal weal of souls, she casts her maternal glance on that young boy, and her thought and feeling in his regard is this—let all other interest of his, if needs be, pass uncared for. Heed not if his health be imperilled, attend not when told that the air which surrounds him is fever-laden, that some dread pestilence is nigh; calculate not for his body, saying—What shall he eat? or what shall he drink? or wherewith shall he be clothed? After these things let the Gentiles seek. Or, if you take heed, as in some measure you must, for his food and raiment and other temporal cares, with ten thousand times more love and skill watch the transcendent interests of his immortal soul. By the vastness of his eternal destiny, by the dread distance that separates Heaven's unending joy from the quenchless fires of the nether pit—let the child's soul have its imperious claim acknowledged; its portentous needs supplied. And the Church of Christ, in all her majestic strength—the great Pope of Rome who rules her, the Bishops spread over all the earth—the Church, clad in all the august panoply of her Divine endowments, takes to her side the barefooted child of the street, and in the name of the Sovereign Creator, Redeemer, and Judge she stands as trusty sentinel to guard the priceless treasure which has been set in his innocent soul.

Her holy love for the child she expresses in various details of pastoral zeal. But her chief expedient for the promotion of his well-being is the flinging round him the overshadowing providence of a thoroughly Christian school. She cannot seize on his free will and make him not sin. She aims at teaching the child God, the revelation of God, his own eternal destiny, God's law, the sanction of the law, grace, the means of grace, sacraments, prayer. She aims, moreover, at moulding the young heart according to the form that pleases God, so that while

the intellect is being illuminated the moral faculty may be trained into the virtuous disposition which points to the fulfilment of all justice. This furnishing of the mind with religious knowledge and this turning of the heart towards moral good is, in the Church's judgment, as in God's judgment, the chief purpose of all institutions for training the young. True, she values the knowledge that fits the child for the part that shall be his in work of earth and time; but above all and before all, and immeasurably before all, she seeks for her little ones the Kingdom of God and His justice.

To-day the Church's chief ruler in these parts sets before you his purpose of providing unto the young flock in this district of the city the blessing of a Christian school, and asks of your faith and zeal the material aid towards its realisation. His appeal, like the appeal for Christian schools all the world over, is based on that which I have spoken—the preciousness of the child's soul and the awful importance of its eternal destiny.

But an argument is given to him who pleads here to-day which may not be employed by all who ask for school supply to children. Dearest brethren—citizens of this northern capital—permit one whose associations and ordinary experience are of the midland and southern counties to direct your thought to considerations which enhance the appeal addressed to you this morning. 'Tis for the child of Belfast city, for the building of a Christian school in Belfast, that your contributions are solicited. For every earnest and thoughtful one amongst us, this means stronger claim of the child's soul, more urgent call on the part of the Divine honour, more pressing solicitude on the Church's side, and, let us hope, more abundant reward from the Most High. Child of the Church in the northern capital will have demanded of him by the Almighty in his matured age a programme of life, the same, indeed, substantially, with that which is ordered unto the Catholic everywhere, but of such difference as render his need of careful training greater than that of his coeval in the southern province. You alone, brethren, of the Catholic inhabitants of a large Irish

town, dwell amidst a majority of non-Catholics. 'Twill be much for God's glory if you give serious thought to something which follows therefrom. You have the true faith taught by the Divine Master, and confirmed by the Holy Spirit. You alone of Belfast citizens have it. You know the Lord's will as to the conditions of eternal life. You alone know it. You have immediate access to the institutions of grace which enable men to vanquish the Evil One and be saved. You alone have it. For all this blessed thing is presented to the human race through the medium of a Church which teaches authoritatively the Divine law and the body of Divinely revealed doctrine, and, of all the religious corporations within this city's compass, you alone belong to a Church of that character. And since the Son of God, bidding the Apostles to preach His doctrine and gather men into His Church, declared that whosoever should not believe their authoritative teaching should be condemned, we know that all they who are without the pale of the one true Church are liable to the Divine condemnation, and, unless ignorance plead their apology, are in the way which leads to the soul's eternal ruin.

Now it is not permitted to any child of Adam to behold his fellow-man in danger of eternal perdition without entertaining in his regard sincere compassion. Charity —universally binding law—exacts of us sorrowing concern for our neighbour in his need. When that need is the supreme need, need of the supreme good and risk of the supreme evil, which is the soul's loss, then does the full weight of the law of charity press on one pity for the imperilled soul and zealous endeavour to rescue it. He who sees his brother in danger of God's eternal anger, and, being able to do it, fails to save him, becomes, by the very failure, himself the object of the Divine anger, and deserves an eternal penalty. They who keep Heaven's gate allow no man to enter thereby who, when 'twas given him to do so, refused to save his neighbour's soul. Look round, then, Catholics of Belfast, on your fellow-citizens who lack the authoritative guidance of Christian truth and the strengthening grace of Christian

Sacraments. The march of time brings them ever nearer to the decisive examination before Divine Justice, and He Who shall judge them has declared that all who shall not have had faith in His One Church, and done the religious service which He appointed her to teach, He will condemn. Look round and see their sad condition. Pity their sore need. Love them for the sake of God, Who has commanded us to love them; Who created them for the same unending bliss for which He destined us, and Who Himself endured agonising and ignominious death to save them. And, loving them for His sake, help them if you can. Many of them are your friends; some your fellow-workmen; some your kind and generous employers. Help them in this direst need. In this is charity's noblest aim; in this is charity's highest function. From fulfilment of this shall come rapturous joy of the Holy Spirit; to feel that our fellow-man's heavenly crown has been partly woven by us—that we have added some bright beams to the perennial sunshine that envelops him. To be permitted to do it is grand; to be bound to do it is grander still.

How shall it be done? It shall be done if you render yourselves witnesses to Christian truth. 'Twere better expressed thus: It shall be done if you obey the Divine arrangements whereby you are all appointed to witness unto Christian truth. Should plainer speech be called for, then, dearly beloved, here it is: Edify your fellow-citizen. By your lives' lesson teach him the Divine truth, the Divine power, and the Divine hope of our religion. Followers of Jesus Christ in this great city—*sursum corda!* Lift up your mind and heart, and respond to the ennobling demand which the Master addresses unto you. Let your light so shine before your fellow-men that, seeing your good works, they may recognise the truth of the Creed which you profess. When they shall have heard from your lips or read in books the holy law of which we make profession let it be free to them to scrutinise your lives, and let them behold therein the same law generously fulfilled. The observation of such a thing bears message of converting logic to the minds and hearts of those that are

without the fold, and forces them to think that not flesh and blood has inspired this religion of Catholics, but the grace of the Father Who is in Heaven.

Do I hear someone say: You ask too much; you present too lofty an ideal to us poor mortals, weighed down by the infirmities of the flesh and encompassed by the world's dangers. Brethren, say not so—think not so. Consider the wondrous aids your religion gives you, the startling things that are granted you with possession of true faith. Take one gift which the Almighty, through the Church, bestows upon us. This morning at that altar the ceremonial of the Mass was interrupted for a space while a man from the crowd of worshippers walked that nave and knelt at the Communion rail. He held the white cloth in his hands; the priest came down from the altar and approached him, bearing between his fingers what seemed to be bread; he placed it on the man's tongue, and the man soon after swallowed it. Do we remember, as we ought, that that which the priest placed on the man's tongue was the Son of God, the Creator and Monarch of the Universe? Think on it, dearly beloved. One can but poorly speak it. Think on it. Suppose that man to leave the holy place immediately and walk through the public way. Look upon him. There pass by him many members of other religious denominations. How wondrous the contrast between him and them! How little they suspect, as they actually touch him in passing, that he bears within his breast the Creator, Redeemer, and Judge of mankind! They have, perhaps, worked with him yesterday; they bid him good morning in ordinary light fashion; they feel on a level with him in all things. But to what sublime height is he not raised above them! Never have they had, and, until they join the one true Church, never shall they have, the honour that is his. Let the richest merchant who has not Catholic faith drive by; he is poor compared with the ethereal wealth stored within the communicant's breast. Let the proudest noble in the land, with impressive heraldic glory emblazoned on his gilded chariot, pass; he is of lowly rank beside the unutterable majesty conferred on the humble son of the Church. The riches of all the world and

the fancied possessions of all the world's misers piled higher than the giant mountains, the loftiest heights of glory ever dreamed by uncurbed ambition, all the created things in amplest possession that the heart did ever yearn for—all are but vile nothing beside that which the simple member of the Holy Catholic Church bears with him up the street, and which he can have each Sabbath morning—nay, each day of the week—if he but choose to receive it. And God comes into us in that wondrous Sacrament to enable us to fulfil the law, to strengthen by that Celestial Food our human weakness, that we may stand firm against all the soul's enemies and triumph over them; that when suggestions and influence of earth or Hell tend to seduce us from our bounden allegiance to God, the power of the Heavenly Thing which we receive at the altar may give robust energy to the will, and make us ever faithful to the Most High. Nor is aught that God demands of us too arduous, seeing that Himself, very God, comes into our inmost being to fit us for the doing it. "Though armies encamped should stand together against us" our hearts need not fear, since the same Sovereign Lord Who gave the law and will judge our custody of it comes Himself into our hearts, that we may faithfully keep it. Did a battalion of shining archangels swoop down from the sky on festive day during oblation of the Mass, and, having flashed ethereal sunbeams for an instant before the people, did they enter, one into each member of the congregation, to lend heavenly aid for the spiritual combat, 'twere great honour and great cause for joyful hope in the struggle. 'Tis not done, dearest brethren, but that which is done is infinitely beyond it. The all-perfect God gives Himself to those who believe in His Own Holy Church. Fortified by this supreme grace, we may all be brave in combat. The Divine Eucharist gives light to us in darkness; chastens the heart's desires, and elevates its aspirations. On the great doomsday it shall be manifested that they who feed upon it frequently and holily are the strong souls who, when the evil inclinations of fallen humanity would move them to wrongdoing, seize upon the foul tendencies of their own hearts, cast them down and trample

upon them; then, standing on the ruins of base passions, proclaim the victory of Heaven's grace.

Wherefore, sons and daughters of the Church in this great city, be not faint of heart when it is intimated unto you that an exalted programme of Christian morals is presented for your fulfilment. Be not fearful when you hear that the cause of Divine truth and of the needful assertion of the Church's evidence is in a special sense dependent on you. When you are reminded that the souls of thousands upon thousands around you, deprived of their inheritance by the sad apostasy of three hundred years ago, deprived of the light of true faith, deprived of the use of the system of grace which the Lord has ordained, deprived of the delightful privilege of feeding on the Body and Blood of the Divine Redeemer, deprived of the helpful good and the delicious enjoyment of devotion to our Blessed Mother Mary—robbed of all this and beguiled off the true road to eternal life by the awful perversion of Luther's heresy—when reminded that the sincere among them can be brought to suspect the truth of our Holy Church, if they see solid and permanent Christian virtue in the great body of their Catholic neighbours, arise, and stand erect, responsive to the call of noblest charity. Let the probity of your lives shine before them as evidence that your Church is Divine. *Sursum corda*—lift high your thought and your sacred ambition; show unto them magnificent virtue. Magnificent is the religion God has given you, and magnificent the aids wherewith that religion supplies you. And when you shall have gone from this world let those who shall then occupy the benches whereon you now sit be, in their turn, edifying servants of God.

Unto this we build and furnish the Christian schools within the borders of Belfast. We want here, the Catholic Church wants here, God wants here—a Christian school in the thorough sense of the name—a school wherein the upspringing generation shall be supplied with the useful and becoming equipment of knowledge that shall fit them to take honourable part in the legitimate concerns of this life, and bring credit to their Church by their intelligence, industry, and all social virtues; but, above all, we and the

Church and God want a school which shall contribute towards the higher purpose of producing splendid servants of the Most High: a school where the theology of the catechism shall be well taught, and where conscientious masters and mistresses, under pastoral supervision, shall form the young hearts and manners after the fashion which the Lord wills. May the Most High God look down in blessing on the initiation of the noble enterprise, on its progress in the near future, and on its working for long years to come. May those schools be so well built and furnished by you and so well administered by those whose part it shall be, that they may be a fount of living waters leading to fruitful results for the Divine honour in this district of your city. Through their operations may there be seen for long generations to come the hard-toiling labourer and artisan held in the sacred bond of Christian temperance; the man in position of trust inviolably honest from the sense that the All-seeing Eye is ever upon him; the poor and afflicted members of the Church serenely patient in their trials; the young maiden employed amid the seductive perils of the large mill, chaste as the untrodden snow; the youth of hot blood and relish for life's enjoyment, piously attentive to religious duties.

Should this come to be, then shall St Malachy's new schools and all schools for which money is collected to-day be registered in the book of life as an agency in the Church's hands for aiding souls to Heaven. And when the Just Judge shall by and by take the children well trained in those salutary nurseries, and who shall have served Him aright in after life, when He shall admit them through the pearl gate and enthrone and crown them in His Kingdom, may all you who shall have helped to build the schools have share in the eternal recompense!

THE UNKNOWN GOD.

PREACHED AT ST SYLVESTER'S, LIVERPOOL, ON OCCASION OF THE UNVEILING OF AN ALTAR IN HONOUR OF ST JOSEPH, *Third Sunday of Advent*, 1900.

MAY it please your Lordship—"There hath stood One in the midst of you Whom you knew not." Of vivid interest, brethren, to the ambassadors of the Jews must have been those words of the Baptist, read to us in this day's Gospel. 'Twas of no ordinary one he spoke; 'twas of One greater than himself—One for Whom he was unworthy to do even menial service. Was it not like an intimation that He Whom the Jewish people had long looked for had come—was near them? In very truth, ere long He came to Jordan's banks, the Eternal, Majestic Creator—yet no token of majesty did He display. As one of the multitude did He offer Himself to the Baptist for baptismal laving; no marked regard of men did He draw upon Himself.

So had it been, but more emphatically, in the three decades of years that had preceded. The veil that hid His glory from the group by the Jordan was not so dense as that wherewith the lowliness of childhood enveloped Him. And, as by the sacred river one man, illumined by Heaven, knew the mystery hidden in Jesus Christ, so in the greater obscurity of His infancy was it given to one man to penetrate the veil that shrouded the Divine personality of the Child of Nazareth. See, dearest brethren, with fancy's eye that simple household in the obscure village: a man of the artisan class, his wife and her child; lowly their condition; modest their place in the thought of those dwelling around them. But, the greatness of that household, who shall comprehend? Who shall estimate the treasure that enriched it? Its glory to the eyes of the

angelic spirits keeping watch round about, what tongue can tell? No Eastern seer divined it; no Grecian sage discovered it. Look with reverent curiosity into the holy house. See Joseph at eventide, his day's work done. He seats him by the fireside to rest. To enhance his sense of repose he takes the Child to his tender embrace. The Infant's arms encircle the good man's neck; the Infant's cheek is pressed to his; the little One rests with childhood's trust upon the manly breast. Men and women enter the house, for friendly visit. Little they think that the man clasps to his innocent heart the Monarch of Creation! Advanced somewhat in age, the Child climbs to Joseph's knee, and seats Himself thereon. With the fresh joy of tender years He looks into Joseph's face; with tiny hands He strokes his cheek; with the struggling speech of childhood He entertains him. Who that looks on can dream that while the man sustains the Child, and catches the message of love that beams from the young eyes, and gives back the replies of condescending manhood to a child's questioning, his whole soul is in tremulous adoration before the Power Divine he upholds? Times were when the saintly man walked the village street, the Child clasping His protector's hand, walking beside him. A friend met him, and stayed his steps for brief converse. The friend laid his hand on the Boy's head, stroked His cheek, inquired how His health fared, and spoke the playful things we speak to the little one whom we meet with his father in the public way. He knew not that beneath the brown curls he touched there was enshrined the wisdom of the Godhead! Picture the Youth working at the carpenter's bench. What a scene for Christian mind to contemplate. A beam of timber, one end held by Joseph, the other held by the Almighty Creator! Joseph cutting, shaping masses of wood, aided in dutiful readiness by the Boy; the Boy taught by Joseph the ways of the craft—the Boy being Master and Maker of all things! Did there occur one of the mishaps not uncommon in such circumstances; was the young Disciple's unpractised hand ever wounded by one of the sharp instruments that belong to a carpenter's equipment? And, if blood flowed, and the anxious master,

having staunched the wound, summoned the mother, that her more deft hand might wind healing bandage round it, who, of the outside world, looking on, could think that the red stream which came flowed from the veins of the Lamb of God—was the Precious Blood which was to redeem all Adam's race?

Thus, mortal being of common type was the Child to the eye and judgment of all around; to Joseph, the guileless and just soul—the chosen one—he was God made man, the world's Maker and Judge. And because Heaven's decree made honourable discrimination in favour of that holy man, and confided to him the solemn secret and custody thereof, it is meet that all who have been called to discipleship of Jesus Christ should render the homage of honour, trust, and love to Joseph. In the mind of the enlightened Christian the picture of the Divine Child has the Virgin Mother and her holy spouse beside Him; the heart that loves the Infant Saviour cherishes Mary and Joseph. When we build a temple to the glory of the Lord Jesus we deem ourselves not to have completed its sacred furnishing until side by side of the great altar for the worship of the Lamb we have set up altars to Mary and Joseph. Henceforth, when you who render your vows to Heaven in this holy place shall look upon the fair work of art displayed to your gladsome gaze and blessed by the Bishop to-day, seeing dear St Joseph you shall see in his arms the Author of your salvation; speaking devout salutation to the loved saint, you shall feel that homage to the holy patriarch will help to fuller and more sanctifying knowledge of the Incarnate God, Who, when hidden from all the world beside, was revealed to the privileged souls of Mary and Joseph.

Transfer your thought, brethren, from the long past age of Mary and Joseph and Jesus in His mortal sojourn on earth; study the phenomenon of our day—God in the midst of men, and men knowing Him not. That which the bodily eyes of Joseph saw has gone from earth; but that which was paramount in the Child of Nazareth, the Godhead, is still in our midst. The Lord is in his creation, and in manifold sense. Firstly, in His power. All that

which He called into being He ever maintains; and, in the exercise of His power, which is one thing with Himself, is God present through all the universe. He fills all being. In all His works, from the greatest to the least, he ever abides that He may preserve them. Within the heart of every mountain, in the core of every fruit, in every bubble that floats on the stream, in the bosom of every flower, in the leaves of every tree, in the glow of the sunbeam, in all the long list of beings from the planet Arcturus, whose bewildering millions of miles' distance almost defies the reckoning power of man, to the grain of dust beneath one's feet—in all is the Almighty Creator present. In ourselves, no less; He is in the midst of us. May not one more fitly say—We are in the midst of Him? In every bodily member, in each vein through which the life-blood flows, in bone, muscle, and tendon, in the active brain, in heart and lungs, is He ever present. Ever in the midst of us is He, likewise, by His wisdom. Of the vast and complex creation He administers wise government. Countless worlds of portentous magnitude whirl round the mighty sun; swifter their movement hundreds of times than the hurricane's rush; yet is admirable order in all their procedure, their guide the wisdom of the Most High. Consider the beautiful ceremonial acted before our eyes in the heavenly bodies that are visible to us—the order of the sun's rising and setting, his stately march across the sky each day, the birth, growth, and waning of the moon, the orderly sequence of the seasons, the consequent picturesque variations on the face of nature—the beauty of snow-clad winter, the cheer of budding spring, summer's joyful bloom, the fair revolution of autumn, whose bewitching colours make, perhaps, the loveliest feature in earth's annual parade; all this generations of men have seen since the Creator's lordly voice first called the world into being—how admirable the wisdom of the great Lord which guides all the wondrous order!

Witness the same wise order within ourselves. The measured breathing of the lungs—whence is it? God is there directing their action, the suspension of which for a brief space would lead to death. The life-long journeying

of the blood through veins and arteries, the rate of speed at which it moves, the course it follows—all is governed by the ever-present Lord. The structure and action and interrelations of all the body's members the same Lord presides over, so that in each wave of the hand, each step of the foot, each turning of the head, each word and smile, various organs work harmoniously in obedience to Him Whose all-seeing eye supervises the admirable machinery He has created. "The Lord beholdeth the ways of man, and considereth all His steps" (Prov. v. 21).

In our midst is He as a master ruling his estate. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof," and impress of His supreme authority is upon all. When falls the rain-shower? When the Lord commands, and at His word it ceases. Whence blow the winds, and with what force? Thence, and with the force which He prescribes. When loud roars the tempest, or the gentle breezes sigh, God is there to rule the storm and guide the soft-moving air. Look upon the great sea. Wherefore does it now sleep in majestic calm—now awake from slumber, uplift its immense bosom in vigorous activity, effervesce unto mighty wrath, and fling itself with furious roar against the rock-bound coast? To the soul of thoughtful men of faith there speaks in the mighty tone the voice of the great Creator attesting that, whether in its serene peace or in its stormy terrors, it is ruled by Him Whom "winds and sea obey," and Who, in the days of His mortal flesh, walked its surface as though it were solid earth beneath His feet.—Witness the animated things that are devoid of reason's guidance; how admirably instinct, the representative of God's authority, governs them. See and hear the winged creatures of the air. The swallow flies after one fashion; the dove after another; the proud eagle differently from both. Wherefore? Because the Lord, present with all in all, their movements, has ordained it so. Ask the thrush why he sings a certain tune; the canary why he chants another lay; the blithesome lark why his peculiar twittering song high up in the sunlight. All those beautiful creatures, could they speak, would reply that the Heavenly Choir-master, ever in their midst, guides their

varying music; in all being, life, and movement around us, in sun, moon, and stars, in rain and dew and snow and winds, in flying birds and browsing cattle, in creeping serpent and swimming fish—does the Universal Monarch reign.

And we—we, at all times, and in all that belongs to us, are subject to His royal jurisdiction. In the centre of the human heart, through the intricate chambers of the human mind, the King's writ runs; our thoughts and fancies, our love and hate, our desires and repugnances are subjects of a law. And within each one of us there dwells the mysterious vicegerent of God's authority, conscience. We entertain a sense of law, and there is an unerring something which assures that that sense of law is emanation of a superior power that guides us. We may close the eyes to signs and remembrances of the Most High without us; we may turn deaf ear to external monitors and preachers; but until we part from our own selves we are compelled to listen to that voice which champions right and justice from within, and which, either by leading us to dutiful submission or to bitter remorse, attests God's all-holy authority in the very midst of our souls. Again, is not the great Lord in our midst by His loving Providence? "My lots are in Thy hands" was the Psalmist's worshipful acknowledgment to God; the same should be ours. The touch of His fatherly hand is ever upon us. Not so closely, nor with such tender love, does mother watch her sick child as does the Most High keep providential guard over all the sons of men. In all the instants since our existence commenced has He been beside us in loving vigil. In tender childhood a mother's eye watched over us; but that mother slept sometimes and thought not of us while she slept. The Heavenly Father's loving watch was unceasing; by day and by night, at home and abroad, the sunbeam of His gracious countenance has ever played upon us. And through life His infinite power, ever active in our regard, has been the minister of His loving providence. Our daily bread—whose hand bestows it? The hand of God. "Every man that eateth and drinketh, this is the gift of God" (Eccles. iii. 13). The air we breathe—the

same beneficent Lord supplies it with gracious punctuality each time our lungs call for it. As we move through the day's occupations, as we sleep in soundless midnight, forgetful even of self, the great Lord is ever nigh, dispensing blessings. "All expect of Thee that Thou give them food in due season. When Thou openest Thy hand they shall be filled with good; but if Thou turnest away Thy face they shall be troubled. Thou shalt take away their breath, and they shall fail and return to their dust" (Psal. 103).

And, behold, brethren, as the world grows older, new revelations of this sweet thoughtfulness for man. As men with the revolving of the ages improve their little acquaintance with the wonders of His creation, they encounter fresh footprints which betoken that the bounteous Father ever walks about among us in gracious love. Abel, the just one, sacrificed to Him; Abraham exercised heroic faith in Him; the Maccabees died for Him; Catharine of Siena and Philip Neri went aflame with red-hot love for Him; yet were there alluring and stimulating gifts of His to mankind of which they knew naught, though the good Lord's concession of them was from the beginning. While Philip and Catharine served Him, while the seven brave Hebrews suffered death for Him, while Abel, in the long, long past, adored and loved Him, all round them was that beautiful creation of His goodness, the Electric Force of nature. No name had it, then, for man's mental groping had not yet brought him to know it; but the thing was there from the beginning, and to the angels who looked upon it it must have seemed as a special symbol of the providential love that gave it, for it was sweetly hidden, it was spread all over nature, and it was of wondrous energy. Truth is, dear brethren, if we put forth the hand we touch God in His gifts; if we look round us we see the signs of His goodness. The light, be it of sun or moon or stars, reveals it; the myriad drops of rain tell it; our every breath is assertion of His loving presence. "It is He Who giveth life and breath and all things" (Acts xvii. 25). Eating, drinking, moving, resting, waking, sleeping, we live in the embrace of God, the assurance of His power, wisdom,

and goodness ever upon us. Verily there stands One in the midst of us, and He is the Sovereign, Almighty, All-perfect God.

One in the midst of us "whom we know not." In the midst of us, God, Whom we know not. Brethren, is this true? Can we believe that God, ever in the midst of men, is unthought of by men, unrecognised, unknown? If God be unknown to the world, the world is pagan. If God be unknown to half the world, half the world is pagan. If the world shuts out God from its life, the world's life is pagan. If men recognise not God in their lives, or in part of their lives, their lives are pagan, or part of their lives is pagan. In the Christian portions of the world is God refused recognition? Do Christians in appreciable numbers live as though God were not—as though He had no claim to influence their lives—as though He were not in the midst of them?

Look out, brethren, on the human family. Look out on the professing Christian world. Where are they who seem to argue God from the multitude of His blessings—who recognise Him in His active bounty? In ancient days Isaias uttered plaint on the Lord's behalf: "The ox knoweth his owner . . . but Israel hath not known Me, and My people hath not understood" (Isai. i. 3). Over our day a prophet of the Most High might well utter some such lament. Paganism, not as formal profession, but as the dominant atmosphere of thought, feeling, speech, literature, philosophy, and human interest, has in large measure ejected religion even from countries that bear the Christian name, and has attained position of mastery over great portion of human life. Startling statement this to one who inclines to think it false; doubly startling to the good man who perceives it to be true. Look upon the world around us. Judge no individual wrongly, brethren, but note the multitude of pagan spirit that encompasses us. These men accept in word revealed religion; some of them go through a programme of religious observance which, in an age whose standard they and men like them have helped to lower, wins for them the reputation of being fairly good men. But they make niggard acknowledgment of God's

claims upon them; they tender Him but meagre share of their interest, their thought, their energies, and their time. In the lives of such men there are certain very restricted spaces within which the Almighty receives recognition; their lives in chief part show no sign of God—they are pagan. See it in detail. See the man—you shall easily find him—who confines God, his dealings with God, God's interference with him to a small portion of his time. Of every seven days he sets aside six within which his Creator, his Redeemer, his Sovereign Lord, his Bountiful Provider may not trespass. Some sign of God he allows on one day of the seven. On the rest, no formal act of worship save, perhaps, scant and poor prayer at close of day. And the brief time assigned to the Lord's worship is given by many with a grudge; it is not an offering which love sends up. This type of man limits God as to place, likewise. God's place, he thinks, is the Church. In the Church and in monasteries and convents the Lord may fittingly be the object of thought and service; in the sacred place a man's mind may well regard Divine things, his lips utter holy language, and his heart be stirred by religious emotions. But, in the public way; in the workshop, factory, or foundry; in the family circle; in the hall of public assembly; in the railway carriage; in the Houses of Parliament; on the fair green; on the course where horses run in the race; in all places without the sacred precincts of the Church, where man, single or collective, is found—there is no God! True, they acknowledge Him in the sense that it is admitted sin may not be done; but this seeming conscientiousness is scarce more than an understanding that the evil which Society, as well as God, condemns, may not be committed. Worshipful thought of God outside the narrow space of the Church do many men admit? Dutiful and loving sense of the presence and providence and kinghood of God—solicitude for the interests of God outside the sacred place—do many men feel?

Besides restricting the Almighty to meagre share of time, and to the small area of His Temple, the multitude seem to confine their concern for Him to professedly religious exercises. They recognise that prayers, Sacra-

ments, Masses, and hearing of sermons have to do with the Most High, but in other departments of human activity and interest no place will they allow Him. It is as though it had been discovered that the earth and the fullness thereof are NOT the Lord's! that St Paul had withdrawn his exhortation: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God." True, men allow Him place in public life, as in private, on the working-day as on the festival, on the highway and hall of assembly as in the Church. This unchivalrous recognition they give Him; in every time and place they avail of His gracious bounty; all—sinner and saint, cold unbeliever as well as fervent Catholic—all breathe the life-giving air which His kindly hand scatters plentifully around; all enjoy the gladsome sunshine He sheds upon them, and eat the daily bread He bestows. They willingly accord Him place in their lives so far as His omnipotence and goodness serve the convenience of man. But when the great Creator claims recognition for His other attributes; honour for His sublime majesty, fear for His sacred justice, obedience to His sovereign authority, respect, love and loyal championing for His Church, reverent heed to all His wide-reaching interests, 'tis but loving and brave Catholics—and they are a minority—who satisfy His claim. As to the great mass of mankind—He is in the midst of them and they know Him not.

Oh, foolish Christians, who hath bewitched you? Know you of what a good you rob yourselves by closing eyes and heart to God? Learn the secret, well known to those whom vivid faith illumines and energises: darkness is light where there is pious remembrance of God; solitude is sweetly entertaining with companionship of God; toil is lightened by a sense of the presence of God; poverty is made rich to the religious soul that lays hold of God; the weary bed of sickness is cheered by prayerful communing with God; all the ills of earth are endured with meritorious peace when there is devout thought on the nearness and sustaining Providence of God. "Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me" (Ps. xxii.). "Godliness is profitable to all things,

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having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8).

The sentence of St Paul which I have just cited, moves me to read for you something which illustrates the right and the wrong spirit in this connection. A magazine published by members of a Nonconformist sect in Ireland presented to its readers some months since the narrative of an interesting experience of a traveller in the west of our country. This gentleman visited Mayo, one of the poorest of the Irish counties. There he found in a small village an industrial institution established by the zealous charity of a convent of nuns, as a means to aid the poor people unto immediate means of subsistence, and impart a training to the young that should serve them in after-life. It was a woollen factory. A hundred hands were employed at the looms, and the visitor notes the marked betterment in the condition of the youths which the institution of the factory had brought about. In the course of a description of what he saw, he wrote the following passage, which indicates the connection between his sketch and the solemn subject of our thoughts. "It was strange to see above the spinning frames a life-size figure of the Saviour; but in such a work of deliverance it did not seem out of place. It was strange when a sister came round at noon ringing a small hand-bell, because the chapel Angelus could not be heard above the rattle of the machines; and for a few seconds every loom ceased. The silence was, to say the least, strikingly solemn, and, to the heretic, at any rate, it had some measure even of edification. In sharp contrast to it came sad memories of terrible talk characteristic of more imposing establishments in more enlightened spots." Brethren, consider the narrative and the comment thereon. "It was strange to see above the spinning-frames a figure of the Saviour!" Strange? Whose figure should be above these spinning-frames if not the figure of the world's Redeemer? Were not those looms made by Him? Were not each slender thread and each mass of wool His creation? The hissing steam and the wondrous power of its expansive tendency; the wheels and bars and screws of the intricate machinery; the men and youths who worked

it; the whole world!—was not all made by Him Whose image was set on high in the old-fashioned, or—shall I call it—new-fashioned, or shall I call it—queer-fashioned workshop—that Christian workshop in Ireland? That Angelus bell—did it not advertise unto all listening souls the memorable hour in the world's history when His shining archangel swooped down from the sky and told the chosen Virgin that Eternal God was about to take flesh in her womb? And is it not truth, firm as the everlasting hills, that whether on the banks of the River Moy in the modest factory in Ireland, or in the vast factories and foundries by the Mersey, Tyne, Tweed, and Humber, Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord, the all-wise Overseer, the majestic God, unto Whose glory all mankind and all the works of mankind must tend?

Brethren, be this our mind; be this our attitude of heart and life. Let the All-holy One Who is in our midst be ever recognised by us. "Render unto God the things that are God's." Give unto Him the firstfruits by the ever faithfully rendered homage of morning prayer; night prayer, likewise. Render unto Him the homage of prompt remembrance of His presence and His authority when you are tempted to violate His law. Let the fear and love of Him be blended with your life, in this sense, that before committing yourself to a side on grave public questions, you consider in the council chamber of conscience God's side in the matter. When you buy or sell, forget not that the Lord is witness. In the hour of recreation be mindful that He is beside you. Entering the polling-booth at public election let not voice of conscience be stifled by the seduction of any man's oratory. Undertaking grave office of trust, think well that God has claims on you therein. For the rest, brethren, be this in every Christian mind: one is our aim in life—to know, love, and serve God; one is our ultimate destiny—to live and reign with God for ever.

THE CHURCH—HER MISSION AND ENDOWMENTS.

PREACHED AT CONSECRATION OF MOST REV. DR FENNELLY, COADJUTOR ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL, IN ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, THURLES, *9th June*, 1901.

"As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you."

MY Lords, Very Rev. Fathers, and dearest faithful in Christ:—This word of the Divine Master, found in the 20th chapter of St John's Gospel, contains warrant and explanation of the ceremony which is done here to-day. Episcopal consecration is the generative process whereby the Church perpetuates herself. As the continuous accretions in man's bodily frame are providentially designed to supply for constant waste of tissue, so are new appointments of pastors a renewal of the Church's life that her sublime mission may endure for ever. Wherefore he alone knows what a bishop is who knows what the Church is and whereunto she has been instituted. In the ordinary flow of life we run the risk of bestowing meagre thought upon her. As the mass of mankind, while feeding on the daily bread which the hand of bountiful Providence scatters among them, forget Him—nay, even offend Him—so are there many who drink at the fountain of grace which is in the Church, but are guilty of undutiful forgetfulness of the great thing she is, and of the wonders which the Most High bestows upon us through her.

That text from St John expresses a parallel—suggests a likeness—may I say identity—between the Church and the Incarnate Son of God. To the Church He said—"As the Father hath sent Me, I send you." He indicates the fact of His sending her; the purpose whereunto He sent her, and the prerogatives wherewith He endowed her.

"I send you." 'Tis first praise of the Church—she is from God. Not flesh and blood have given her being; not skill or resource of man has produced her. Even as Minerva was fabled to have sprung from the brain of the father of pagan deities, it was God's imperial mind that conceived the Church, and by His Power Divine was she brought forth. Questioned by any unto whom she brings message of solemn import—Whence come you? she is authorised to make answer—"Ex ore Altissimi prodivi"—I come from the Most High God! Worthy of her Divine origin is the purpose for which He made her. Not for aught of earth or time—not for man's temporal weal—did He design her. "As the Father hath sent Me, I send you." The purpose of His coming was the purpose of her being. He came to be the way, the truth, and the life. He was the way, the guide, whom men were bound to follow, His will being man's law. By His death He wrought saving grace which was to give spiritual life to the dead world. He delivered to mankind the truth of His Father's revelation. It was His good pleasure that the Church, in such sense and measure as is possible to human organisation, should assume His own exalted mission; she, likewise, was to be the way, the truth, and the life. I invite your pious thought, dearest brethren, for brief study of portion of this purpose of the Church's existence.

Like to Jesus Christ, and by virtue of His arrangement, she, too, can say—I am the truth. He appointed her teacher. "Going"—said He to her—"teach." Over what area was she to teach? "Going, teach all nations." "Preach the Gospel to every creature." White races and coloured; erudite professor and untutored dolt; statesman, orator, military chief and artisan; childhood and matured age—all are her pupils. The subject matter of her teaching is the entire revelation of God. "The Paraclete whom the Father will send in My name will teach you all things, and will bring all things to your mind whatsoever I shall have said to you." There is His promise to the Apostles, and all things which the Lord had spoken the Holy Spirit communicated unto them, in order that they should deliver the same to mankind. Profound secrets of the Divine

mind—mysteries which human intelligence fails to comprehend, but which it has pleased the Sovereign Lord to command man to believe, He has given His Church to teach. Truths which, once manifested to it, human reason can understand, He has commissioned her to teach. Dogmas of natural religion, which reason can discover by her own powers, He has included in the message He committed to the Church, in order that we may with more ease and security become acquainted with them, nor be averted from the acquisition of salutary knowledge by the waywardness of our fallen will. Having bidden the Church to speak this word of life, He ruled that her teaching should be assured truth—that from her lips falsehood should never come. It is her great prerogative, an item in the very programme she delivers to the world—that she is infallible. A bold profession this; a startling boast of the Church. But less she may not claim. Did not the Divine Master bid her preach the Gospel to every creature? Did he not subjoin the dread sanction of her preaching—" He that believeth not shall be condemned" ? Surely this Scripture means the Lord's command to men to believe her teaching under penalty of condemnation by the Eternal Judge. More convincingly evident, perhaps, has He made this by declaring the gracious means he chose to fit her for her teaching mission. He set His own Self in her midst. He told the world that He is within her; that through all ages He will abide with her, in order that through all ages she may teach aright His saving truth. Thus, brethren, it is Bible revelation that God's Church, as promulgator of Divine truth, cannot lead men astray. 'Twas because of this St Paul told the Ephesians that the Lord gave Apostles and prophets, and evangelists and doctors, in order that we be not children tossed to and fro, carried about by every wind of doctrine. In the barque of Christ we are borne straightforward towards the port of heavenly bliss, and the influence which propels us is the very breath of the Spirit of the Most High. A bold claim —did I say? this claim of the Church to the proud prerogative of infallibility. She who utters this boast must confront a multitude of hostile, captious critics in all times.

That profession of hers is a challenge to friend and foe: search my history; read the doings of all my supreme rulers; peer into the acts of every ecclesiastical council; take me in all my relations with Society, in my every encounter with heresiarch or scientist, and—"which of you shall convince me of sin?" which of you shall show me that I have led souls into error?

Men whose name is legion have accepted her challenge. With eager interest and keen eye they examine the story of her life. They search history. Many seek only the things set down against her in what they call history. They adduce historical facts—so they name them—on which they rely to convict this boastful Church of wrong, and prick the bubble of her inerrancy. Of those who dispute the Church's claims many not merely lack the religious knowledge which they decline to accept from her lips; they lack, moreover, the art of seeking knowledge aright. Their dialectics are unsound, as their theology is false. 'Twere enjoyable comedy, did not its consequences for souls make it rueful tragedy—the "historic research" which such men make. In religious polemics they transgress elementary laws of the human mind. It is a law of the human mind that that which is obscure be explained by that which is clear; that what is doubtful have light cast upon it from what is certain. It is a law of the human mind—a law made by nature for the human mind to follow, and intimated to us by nature—that the assured knowledge we possess be employed to aid us in search after further knowledge within the ambit of the same subject matter. Thus a student of physical science, holding certain assigned truths as principles, sets forth in search of further enlightenment, armed with fundamental truths he has already mastered, and prepared to direct his estimate of what falls under his observation by his previous definite knowledge. Such should be the mental attitude of him who, having learned in childhood the Catholic dogma that the Church cannot err, is told in after life that there are things set down in history which tend to disprove that religious tenet. If he enter on historic inquiry he should do so equipped with his already acquired knowledge—one

item in that knowledge being that the Church is incapable of error. They who attack the Church in our day first form, or half form, a judgment unfavourable to her, and then search the writings of anybody, and everybody, for statements that will accord with their irreligious theory. It may be objected: why should a man adhere to what he has been taught in childhood? Every man adheres to what he has been taught in childhood until there comes to his mind sufficient reason for rejecting what he has been taught in childhood. Then let it be remembered that countless are the details in what passes for history, as to which no mind of man, unaided by revelation from above, can pronounce whether they are true or false. Millions have been the doings and sayings of men during the nineteen centuries of the Christian era. Some have been recorded; some not. The records of some have been lost; the records of some mutilated. Besides, men can lie. Men can transmit lies to posterity with plausible argument to sustain them. How abundant are the records of the things which never occurred—concoctions prompted by the evil passions which play so great a part in the governance of human life. It is all named "History"; but he who is logician as well as historian refuses it the name; nor does he in any department of human interest allow himself to be influenced by the unsanctioned assertions which lecturers and scribes have piled up on the library shelves of the world.

History there is, however, which is beyond all cavil. There are facts handed down from even long past ages of which right reason permits no man to doubt. Given sound mind, no man questions the truth of a great French Revolution in the 18th century. No man asserts that the Crusades were a myth. None venture to deny that great Cæsar lived and fought and conquered. For similar reasons, but with the reason vastly enhanced in cogency, no sane man doubts that Jesus Christ lived. It is history, in the true sense of the term. It is history of assured certainty that He taught; that He demanded credence for His teaching as for the teaching of One sent from God —nay, of the very Son of God; that He wrought miracles as Heaven's voucher of His teaching. It is of assured

certainty that He gathered disciples; banded them into a society—gave one amongst them authority over the rest. It is history—solid and clear history—that He, the Son of God, commanded that society, His Church, to teach religion to the whole world until the world's end in His name, declaring that till the end of ages He should Himself be with her in order that she might fulfil aright her teaching mandate. Wherefore it is with her, as with her first chief when the princes and the ancients charged Him not to teach in the name of Jesus. To cavilling heretic and scoffing infidel she makes answer as Peter did: "I cannot but speak the things I have heard"—I must teach the world in the name of Christ, and in teaching it I cannot be wrong! Yes, brethren, blest be the Lord! she is the city that needs not sun or moon, for the Lamb is the lamp thereof, and in the light of her shining must all the nations walk.

Fortunately for men's eternal fate, the Church has well remembered both her right and her obligation to deliver the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Times have been when naught less than the fortitude of the Holy Ghost could strengthen her to proclaim it. The world loves darkness rather than the light. Some revealed truth is unwelcome to fallen man. The interest and the power which rose against the Redeemer when He came to heal the world has oft risen against His Church, for that she proffers unto it His exalted truth. In her infant days the Jewish Sanhedrim laid arm of force upon her and cast her into chains; all the same, she spoke the bold word of the Lord for sake of the immortal souls of men. Christ's twelve chosen ones, dying for sacred truth, gave to the Church of all coming days not merely the stimulus of chivalrous example, but also the tradition of Pentecostal courage which emboldens the Church to withhold not, through fear of man, the saving message of the Most High.

Nor has worldly wisdom, masquerading as religious zeal and prudence, impeded the discharge of her God-given trust. For one word which she judged needful for due expression of her dogma of the Divine processions in the adorable Trinity she lost the entire East—millions upon

millions, who constitute what is known as the Greek Church. Think, brethren, on the prodigious empire over which the Tsar of the Russians holds sway; more than half Europe, with far-extending regions of Asia. Think on his commanding influence amongst the nations. Add to his wide domains the kingdom of Greece and all the Eastern regions which adhere to the Grecian heresy. The Church could have kept them all within her bosom had she consented to omit one word from her formula of faith. The word had not been in her old creeds, but the attitude of heretics led her to deem it necessary for effective declaration of orthodoxy. She added it to her Nicene Creed. By doing so she lost the vast realms of the East, but she asserted the truth of God. Another Empire we know, equalling in material powers, surpassing in prestige, the realm of the Tsar—the Empire on which the sun never sets. It was once ruled by a monarch whose base passions found grave inconvenience in the Divine law which the Church propounded. He would discard his lawful wife and take in her stead a woman whom he sinfully loved. He asked the Church to permit it. The Church refused. He demanded a divorce. The Church made answer that whom God had joined, no man, though he were pope, could separate. Men of evil counsel advised the monarch to free himself from the pressure of the Gospel law by casting off the authority of the Church of God. They suggested that he should become, not member merely, but master, of a new Church, and of such a Church as would not obtrude Gospel morality on man's unruly passions. The lustful king gave ear to the seductive proposal. Witness, dearest brethren, holy Church's trial then. Before her was the prospect of the loss to her for centuries—perhaps for ever—of England's magnificent Empire, one of the wonders of the modern world. But ringing in her ear was the word of the great Apostle: "Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel!" She had been sent to speak God's testimonies even before kings. She anathematised the adulterous purpose of the foul monarch; she lost the mighty realm of England, but she did her part; she championed Heaven's holy law.

Let gratitude to bountiful Providence suggest here parenthetic reflection. When in Capharnaum's synagogue men who relished not the Master's doctrine said: "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" and "some of His disciples went away and walked no more with Him," Jesus, turning to the remnant, asked: "Will you also go away?" Simon Peter answered Him: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." When the unclean king of England flung off the yoke of Christ, and drew, as it were, a third part of the heavens after him, I fancy the spouse of Jesus, His well-beloved Church, turning to a land that lay near, this motherland of ours, and asking: Will you also go away? And—eternal praise to the God Who inspired her!—rising to the appeal, the brave old race replied: Oh, Church of Rome, to whom shall I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and I have believed and I know that thou art the oracle of the living God!

Into this Church of God, this citadel of heavenly truth, a living stone is set by the consecration of an archbishop here to-day. This chosen man, brethren, shall be the Church's spokesman in this portion of the flock, the authorised teacher and judge of faith. Wherefore not a shred of pastoral power could be given him until he had been questioned and questioned again and again as to the soundness of his faith. You heard him, brethren, in presence of this august ecclesiastical assemblage, in presence of the guardian spirit of this cathedral—before the Master Himself, Who is in the tabernacle—examined by the consecrating prelate as though he were a child being prepared for the Sacraments, in order that there should be public guarantee of the purity of his faith. And the test of his faith—what was it? Its absolute concordance with the faith of the Holy Catholic Church, the infallible Church of Rome. Christians of the archdiocese of Cashel and Emly, you shall take your dogmatic belief from your legitimate archbishop. He represents the Church: the Church represents the Eternal God.

My Lord, you have been assigned by the Sovereign Authority—the Christian Church, the Pope of Rome—to

that sublime place. Plenteous be the distillation of celestial gifts upon you in this solemn hour! Years may go ere full responsibility of pastoral rule shall press upon you. The Lord may hear the supplications of them who pray that the robust old oak, of which you are appointed the prop, may stand erect yet many a long day. When on your broad shoulders the full weight of archiepiscopal solicitude shall fall, may the Divine Shepherd be with you to illumine, guide, and fortify! When on the doomsday you shall stand before Him to render account, may no charge of failure in your high office lie against you! May no child of Cashel and Emly forfeit baptismal grace through lack of Heaven's benediction upon you! May no wolf ravage the flock through imperfect vigilance in you! Of those whom the Father gives you, may not even one be lost! We shall see you, at prescribed stage in the ceremonial, mount that archiepiscopal throne, crozier in hand and crowned with the imposing mitre. When the Church's earthly mission shall have ended, and the Prince of pastors shall gather His elect from the four winds, be it given us to see you mount an eternal throne, and don a fadeless crown in Heaven!

"OUR LADY OF YOUGHAL."

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH, YOUGHAL, ON THE *8th September*, 1901.

"I have penetrated into the bottom of the deep, and have walked in the waves of the sea. And the Lord said to me: Take root in my elect. And so in the holy city I rested, and I took root in an honourable people." Words found in the 24th chapter of Ecclesiasticus.

MAY it please your Lordship—Very Rev. Fathers, and dearest faithful in Christ:—This Church of St Mary's, Youghal, assumes, as the years advance, increased comeliness, and grows more and more worthy of its exalted purpose. To-day we see its latest adornments unveiled and blessed by the chief pastor. The pious enterprise which employed the artist's skilled hand in those beautiful representations of the Lord and His Holy Mother just unveiled has been guided, not merely by the supernatural instinct of faith, but also by historic memories of very special interest. Faithful Christians in other towns through the land set up, now in carved wood or stone, now in divers colours on canvas or glass, the hallowed figure of Heaven's Majestic Queen, and they invoke her as Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Our Lady of Lourdes, and so forth. To your old town has come from centuries that are gone this proud inheritance: she can bid her artist—her own artist—make the figure of God's Holy Mother gleam from the walls of her Church, and salute her as her own; it is "Our Lady of Youghal" that beams upon us from that window which you have just seen blessed.

"Our Lady of Youghal!" Wherefore Our Lady of Youghal? Your town, dearest brethren, has interest in

senses new and old. In our day it is tabulated among the health-resorts of Ireland. When summer's balmy air and gladsome light make the face of Nature beautiful, and awaken in us the desire to taste its sweets, men flock to Youghal. The overwrought worker comes hither to relax the mind and renew his bodily energies; they of enfeebled, sickly frame come to drink in the message of joyous health which the sea waves bring with them from the vast ocean, storehouse of the Lord's gracious bounty. In many a suffering one has the march of disease been arrested, many a drooping form has been uplifted again, many a pale cheek lit up and warmed with ruddy glow when salubrious tonic from rolling ocean has given healthful stimulus to the life's stream within their veins. To the seaside of Youghal they come in those times—to the long-drawn beach at the southern end of the town. Time was when the weakly and the sick coming to Youghal bent their steps to the north end, where stood a venerable pile of which to-day but a fragment of gable window remains—the Dominican Abbey of Holy Cross. "Holy Cross" he named the Abbey who, back in the 13th century, founded it, Sir Thomas, one of the historic Geraldines. This name gave place in a subsequent age to that of "Our Lady of Graces," or "Our Lady of Favours"—"Sancta Maria Gratiarum." The change of title was occasioned by the same circumstances which led to the old priory the multitude of the infirm and diseased, and which imparts peculiar interest to the religious celebration of this very hour.

It chanced upon a day, nigh 500 years since, that a group of fishermen stood watching that scene, so monotonous, yet so ever-changing, the wide expanse of sea. They gazed, as we have often seen fishermen gaze, seemingly listless, but in truth observing, calculating, building their prophecies from the countless little things, significant to them, which go on upon the surface of the waters. That mysterious sea! 'Tis there still! The same sea, moving through all the years that have since rolled by, stirred by the breath of the Eternal God—ever hymning for thoughtful Christian the Lord's praise, now in gentle murmur, now in the tempest's thundering roar. On that memorable day the waves were

doing more for the Most High than sounding His glory. The quick-eyed sailors beheld something borne on the surface of the sea. They looked with care; as the waves chased one another they bore it nearer and nearer. The fishermen's long silence was broken. One challenged another's attention—speculation was active among them with the question—what thing is this the incoming tide is bearing? Soon they recognised it—a huge beam of timber, which was at length cast by the tide upon the water edge. The men, being of the poor, rejoiced at any gift which the sea presented to them. Their satisfaction was greater because, the vicinity of the town being then, we are told, specially scarce of wood, the great beam was a thing to be particularly prized. They proceeded to seize it, and take it with them. They failed to lift it. Wondering, they tried again;—in vain. They were men whose daily toil in the invigorating sea had hardened their muscles and strengthened their brawny arms; nevertheless, they were powerless to move the piece of wood. They fetched a pair of horses; not even they were able to draw the beam. Gradually the curious among the passers-by stayed their steps, made inquiry, and shared the wonderment of the fishermen at the extraordinary difficulty of moving that which the tide had lightly cast upon the shore. Larger grew the crowd as intimation of the strange thing spread in the adjoining streets, and before the eager gaze of young and old ten strong horses were yoked to the mysterious beam; they plied their huge strength, they made strained efforts to draw the beam;—in vain! In due time the tide ebbed, then flowed again. As it rose the next time it uplifted the wonderful piece of wood, and bore it towards the Dominican Convent at the north end of the town. A vast throng of people rushed to see it. Down from the priory went two of the religious. They approached the object of universal interest; seized it; raised it—to the amaze of the bystanders; placed it on their shoulders, and bore it to the courtyard of the Abbey! Nigh the porch of the Church in the open cloister it lay. Before many days rain fell in abundance and lodged in the hollow parts of the upturned side of the beam. In those times

one of the frequent worshippers in the North Abbey Church was a certain blind man. Going to the sacred place when the rainpour had ceased, he advanced with cautious step to the porch, and sought with groping hands the holy water stoop. Thinking himself to have found it, he sprinkled himself with the water. The poor man thought it was the water which the priest had blessed; it was but the rain collected in the hollow surface of the strange wood. Twice he dipped his fingers therein and cast water upon himself. Finally, as had been his wont, he washed his darkened eyes with the water, and lo! the darkened eyes were dark no more! He saw the serene sunlight. His heart expanded with holy gratitude, and, hastening into the Temple, he magnified the Lord's bounty which had delivered him from his sad infirmity.

The interest attached to the wondrous beam was enhanced tenfold, and it was felt that preternatural significance was attached to it. The people's pious curiosity soon received notable increase, and, through the same fact, joyful satisfaction. In the night which followed the healing of the blind man, the prior of the convent was told in a vision that within the massive beam there was enshrined the image of the "Virgin of Great Power." Long before the town's material business was resumed the next day a large multitude rushed to the Abbey Church, and whilst spell of religious awe was upon them and they looked upon the portentous wood with solemn admiration for the mysterious providence associated therewith, it was opened at the part whence the blind man had taken the water, and forth from the beam was drawn the ivory figure of God's Holy Mother, a painted copy of which shines upon us from that newly blessed window on this sacred day. Our fancy can well call up the picture of the holy joy with which all—priests and people—prostrated themselves before the carved form of their Mother and Heavenly Queen. 'Twas her image—but her image heaven-sent. In reverent joy they formed processional ranks, and, round the cloister where now your loved dead are lying, with jubilant hymns to Mary, they bore the precious figure. Then, within the Church, in her Son's House, they set her up in place of honour.

Dearly beloved, need it be told? No—your own religious feelings assure you of it: day after day, in constant streams, went the people to gaze upon the precious treasure wherewith the town had been enriched, and to speak their fervid prayers to the Most Holy Virgin. Amid wonders had the sacred image come; amid wonders it remained. They brought to "Our Lady of Graces," as the image was called, the afflicted of all forms—the deaf and dumb, the lame, the blind, the paralysed and deformed, as well as those whom terrorising plague had visited, and numbers went from the holy place blest with healing. Each fresh wonder increased popular trust in the venerable image; each gladsome tale of heavenly cure swelled the throng of visitants, and with each accession to the prayerful multitude greater and ever greater became the miraculous favours.

What a place was Youghal then! Had you lived and visited it in those days on the festival we keep to-day—Our Lady's Nativity—some such sight as this would you have seen. In the main street a twofold stream of human beings, all conditions being represented. One stream moved northward towards the Abbey, most of them that composed it bearing upon them some mark of affliction. The disabled of limb were carried in the arms of kindly friends; the blind were led by the hand; the sorrow-stricken went their way with sobs and sighs. Another stream of those who had been to the hallowed shrine wended its way beside the first in contrary direction. It was made up of a throng whose faces beamed with holy joy and whose voices proclaimed the wondrous favours which Heaven's Queen had brought unto them. Fittingly might it have been said of the mass that thronged the thoroughfare—"Going they went and wept; coming they came with exultation." Far spread the fame of the miraculous image. To remote countries of Europe was the story carried of the heavenly favours procured through "Our Lady of Youghal," as it had become the custom to name the wonder-working image. From Continental peoples pilgrims often came to pray before it, and frequent vouchers of Our Lady's mercy and power did they bring back. In many tongues of

divers nations this old town was pronounced rich in the possession of so precious a treasure.

But the shrines where Jesus Christ and His Mother were honoured were objects of hate to evil spirits. The day came when those evil spirits found men to take part with them in that impious hate. The furious hostility against the Christian Church which was then breathed into men by satanic inspiration armed itself against every shrine and altar and tower in Ireland which expressed to the eyes of the faithful the mysteries of revealed religion. Strong and vital faith had raised up those holy things; stronger and more vivid grew the people's faith by the fervent use of them. Therefore did the Evil One whisper to his ministers that they should sweep from the land every symbol of Christianity. 'Twas an evil day for many a hallowed pile where for ages the Lord's name had been magnified.

Towards the close of the 16th century there held power here as mayor of the old borough a man who feared Elizabeth, the wicked Queen of England, more than he feared his Creator. This was Sir Walter Raleigh. In the year 1587, he ordered the destruction of the North Abbey, whence for some 150 years Holy Mary had dispensed blessings to men. By the law of God's admirable mercy, which oft operated in Rome's storied Colosseum, suggesting to the persecutor in the very act of his nefarious crime the divinity of the religion he sought to distroy, Heaven's power was exhibited against the impious ones who laid sacrilegious hand upon the holy place. An Englishman whom Raleigh had bidden to take part in pulling down the Abbey fell dead from the Church's summit. Three soldiers rushed into the consecrated place, cast down the holy rood that graced the Church and set it on fire; within a few days all three met death in tragic forms. In the onslaught against the Abbey, the friars' chief solicitude was to guard their loved treasure, the image of the Heavenly Mother. They deemed it best done when they besought her to guard herself. The daughter of James, Chief of the Geraldines, whose piety led her to present the Dominican Fathers with a silver casket to hold the precious image, was now entrusted with the precious thing. When her father's troops were sore pressed by

Raleigh, she fled across the Blackwater, bearing "Our Lady of Graces" along with her. Thenceforth the sacred figure was transferred from one faithful custodian to another, as threatening incursions of the iconoclasts necessitated. Its next resting-place, of which we have definite record, was the manor of Sir John Hore, Shandon Castle, County Waterford, where it was deposited in the year 1698. In 1756 it was once again in old Youghal, in the keeping of Father Thomas O'Kelly, prior of such Dominican Convent as then was. After many tribulations for religious persons and places the venerable image was restored to the keeping of our Order in the old Convent in the City of Cork. One of the sacred ordinances of the Dominicans prescribes that sacred objects which had been the property of a community that was destroyed in the penal times be sent, if possible, to the nearest existing monastery of the Order. Therefore, the miraculous image, shorn indeed of some of its artistic beauty by the wearing influence of hundreds of years, but enclosed in rich and ornate shrine, is now set up in honour on a handsome altar erected for it in St Mary's Church in Cork City. The sons of the prophets she first chose have claimed her once again.

My Lord, reverend and dear brethren, the question presses itself upon one on this interesting occasion—Why was your town bereft of this famed image? and why was the venerable Abbey that enshrined it brought to ruin? They who rose up against Christ and against His Holy Mother, not merely professed to be portion of civilised humanity, but claimed fellowship in the Christian religion! That claim was a lie! Had the old image represented Venus, the Goddess of Lust, it might have lain unmolested in the North Abbey. Had it been the image of Queen Elizabeth, foul woman, and had the friars been known to honour it and the townsfolk to sing hymns before it, the Abbey would have been protected by those w[h] held power in that day; nor would the Reformers' conscience have been troubled by scruples concerning the worship of that graven image. 'Twas the image of the Holy Mother of God; therefore it was hated, and should be destroyed! Oh, brethren, what a brand of falsehood does that heresy

of the 16th century bear upon it! What transparent evidence of satanic origin! That beautiful Jewish maid whom God chose to be the mother of His Son, whom the learned and holy fathers of the early Church belauded with rhapsodies of panegyric—who can hate her? Who alone can hate her? What religion can hate her? What religion —what Church—can cast a dark glance upon her?—break her image?—preach against honour and love for her, and condemn our trust in her beneficent power? Let the Holy Book give answer. It was said of old to the serpent by the Most High God Himself—"I will place enmities between thee and the woman; between thy seed and her seed."

Yes, brethren, the Church that is hostile to Mary is the Synagogue of Satan. The Lord be thanked! this black mark is not on our Church. Our Church reveres and loves and prays to Mary, because our Church is the Church of Mary's Son. To honour and confide in her one must believe that her Son is God, and grave reason there is to think that they who reprobate our devotion unto her do so because they fail to believe in the Divinity of Him Who was born of her. What measure of glory shall the human race render to the woman whom Scripture teaches to be Mother of God? Whose is the strong and agile fancy that can reach to within a thousand degrees of conceiving the bewildering greatness of the Mother of God? How many million lights shall we set ablaze before the figure of the Mother of God? What keen æsthetic sense shall choose the verdant leaves and sparkling flowers wherewith we shall deck the altar raised up for the glory of the Mother of God? Let some ethereal spirit, fairer than the rest, invent a "new canticle" in her praise; let the living millions pour out jubilant song; let the myriad dead come back to life to swell the chorus; let the Most High enlarge the spaces of earth, make haste to create the millions that are yet to be—then from every mountain and plain, from every city and hamlet, let the colossal voice of all humanity sound her glory; let the congregated hosts of angels catch the strain and magnify and sweeten it ten thousandfold till all creation be swept by a tempest of harmonious worship. 'Twere well this could be; but Mary's claim surpasses all. Elemen-

tary exercise of human reason, making inference from Bible truth, tells the Christian mind and conscience that no praise rendered her by mortals, unless it be disordered in its kind, and forget that she is but a creature, can equal the title to honour that is hers as Mother of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Wherefore, Christians of Youghal, priests and people, on this her natal day, bid your Lady of Graces welcome back again. "Our Lady of Youghal" is born amongst you once more. To Youghal harbour the finger of God directed that old image, after the restless waves had borne it from the fair land of Italy, where deft, artistic hands had carved it. "I have walked in the waves of the sea. And the Lord said to me: Take root in My elect. And so in the holy city I rested, and I took root in an honourable people." Well may one judge, unless they prove it otherwise, that the old town was holy, and its people honourable in highest sense, when nigh 500 years ago the angels who watch over the azure sea piloted that ivory statuette of the sunny regions of the south into the harbour of Youghal, and the Virgin Mother said—"This is my rest: here will I dwell, for I have chosen it."

Welcome back, O Virgin Mother, to this place of thy ancient choosing! Methinks thou wilt like it better in the tongue which has best told a nation's love for thee and thy Divine Son:—Cead Mile Failte! Welcome a hundred thousand times! Since first thou didst come changes have been wrought. The old Abbey, where my brothers, clad in Dominick's white robe, kept loyal vigil round thy image, has all but gone. The people who prayed to thee and were blessed by thee in the old times sleep beneath its ruined walls. But, Holy Mother, may we almost dare to assert it?—in their children here to-day the ancient spirit still lives on. Then—yet again—welcome to thee, Lady of Heavenly Favours! Sweetest Mother, strike root once more among this "honourable people." Renew thy powerful benedictions upon them. Turn thine eyes of mercy upon every household in this town! Stretch forth the wings of thy maternal providence over every street and lane and alley in this town. When Youghal's sons shall

sail upon the stormy sea, keep thy hand upon them and lead them ever safely back to the anxious hearts that love them. If to-day, as of old, there be victims of disease among us, look with compassion upon them, and, should it be for the Lord's glory, raise them up to healthful vigour. If the sword of sorrow has wounded any of thy faithful children here, pour down Gilead's balm to heal them. Great Mother of the Lord, look athwart this sanctuary; see the loved form of thy Son, displaying for our encouragement that Heart which has so loved men. Ask Him to bless the Christian lady who, using her material wealth as the servant of her faith, set up that beautiful picture for the embellishment of God's Temple. Mother dear, we envy not our forefathers the treasure they possessed in that artistic representation of thee; we envy not the benefactions thou didst work for the healing of their bodily ills and the supply of their temporal needs. The best thing they had was thy compassion for their souls' wants—thy strong help in spiritual perils. May this be unto us all, now and for evermore. See the bishop here; he is Youghal's bishop. Ask the Holy Spirit to illumine and fortify him for the effective fulfilment of his charge. See the priests of this, thy chosen town. Procure for them red-hot love for God thy Son. Look upon the people here and on those in the town below who are here with us in spirit; pray plenteous grace upon them all; victorious combat with temptation ask for all; sanctifying patience in trials secure for all, and brave perseverance in God's holy service. Let thy strongest pleading be—and may it prevail—that we who now gaze with religious joy on thy loved form in rich coloured canvas and brilliant stained glass, may have a long look at the majestic loveliness of thy very self in the Kingdom of God. Amen.

THE DIVINE CHILD—A CONTEMPLATION.

PREACHED IN ST FRANCIS XAVIER'S, DUBLIN, ON THE *Fourth Sunday of Advent*, 1901, IN AID OF ST JOSEPH'S ORPHANAGE, MOUNTJOY STREET.

"LET a man so account of us as of the Ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God."—Words taken from the lesson read in the day's Mass, and found in the fourth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

Dispenser of the mysteries of God is, then, St Paul's title for the Christian minister. Manifold mysteries there are to be dispensed, and various is the manner of dispensing. Thus have we in the Church sacramental offices and the enunciation of the Word of Life.

They who preach the Divine word have to deliver one mystery which is central and fundamental in religion. Festive commemoration of it already overshadows us—the coming of the Son of God in human flesh for love of Adam's race. All dogmas that claim our credence are intimately associated with this. It is, therefore, subject most worthy of deep study. So truly so that the inspired Apostle told the Corinthians that he judged not himself to know anything amongst them but Jesus Christ, Incarnate God. Let us, therefore, brethren, think on Incarnate God! "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this Word that has come to pass."

Shall I speak to you that which it is right for us to think and feel concerning the mystery of the Incarnation? It may not be. "Generationem Ejus quis enarrabit?" asked the inspired prophet, referring to the procession of the Eternal Son from the bosom of the Father. "Incarnationem Ejus quis enarrabit?" may we inquire. Who shall declare His Incarnation? Both truths transcend our power

of comprehending; but the Son's proceeding eternally from the Father seems easier to the mind's acceptance than God's becoming man. Wondrous revelation indeed; startling mystery is this.

It is best to sit down before it, so to speak, in thought, and look at it in the calm wonder of simple faith; look at such portion of the surface of the mystery as it is given us to see. Therefore, brethren, I shall not so much preach to you on the mystery of Christmas as think on it myself; only—I shall think aloud. And that which I shall think on, and ask you to join me in thinking on, is the old, old thing which has oft before claimed our reverent study.

'Tis the period of the world's great peace. Then would the Prince of Peace come to bring peace unending to the race of man. Thousands of years of eager expectation had passed; prophets filled with luminous grace of the Divine Spirit had for centuries told the hopeful message which God had uttered in the beginning to the fallen pair; through many ages types had been shown to give comforting confirmation of the primal promise, and foreshadow the blessing the Promised One was to bring. Now, the fullness of time having come, the heavens were to drop down their beneficent dew, and the clouds to rain the Just One. God, Who created the world, was about to do a mightier thing—redeem the world.

Surely portentous intimation of it shall be made through all nature. Surely, the Great King being about to come down, trumpet blast from Heaven, magnified and multiplied by all the reverberating hills, will herald the event. By day the sun will call on unused resources within his incandescent bosom, and shoot forth new beams of dazzling brilliance; night will be transformed into resplendent day by the blended currents of all Heaven's electric force. There will come down—will there not?—a magnificent archangel, accredited marshall to prepare the way of the Great King. Finding men poor and weak and dull, he will call on myriad fellow-spirits of the skies to swoop down, and with their giant strength and lightning swiftness and ethereal intelligence deck this little globe in fair splendour to receive its Creator. With fancy's eye one sees them

choose some lofty mountain from Alpine range to make His throne; canopy it with jewelled arch from Sion's sublimest mansion, and carpet with golden sunbeams all the earth before it. On the lesser hills they set Heaven's orchestral bands to hail the all-glorious Lord, the human millions being disposed around the world's border to render tremulous adoration in the solemn hour of His coming. Somewhat so, brethren, would our littleness imagine the programme of the Divine Redeemer's coming. In other fashion did God's greatness order it.

Commotion there was, indeed, amongst men—a hurrying of multitudes hither and thither; but this, because the trumpeters of the Roman legions had proclaimed Cæsar's imperial will that all his subjects were to be numbered and enrolled, each in his proper city and town.—Let the multitudes hie them over hill and dale and rushing stream to their various centres of registration. Our concern is with a man and woman who make their way from a Galilean town to Bethlehem of Judea, there to be inscribed in the category of Rome's subject populace. Look upon them, brethren. Well we know them both. From early childhood we have often gazed upon the figures of them set up in marble and carved wood and painted canvas. Look at that dear old man, of whom we all are fond. Our reverent love presumes that they who knew him when he trod the earth looked upon him with loving regard. By his side see the woman. Not now clothed with the sun, and having the moon beneath her feet, but treading Bethlehem's streets with her husband on a winter's night in search of where to rest. She is with child. Scores of strangers—hundreds, perhaps—have flocked to the town for the same purpose as theirs. Comfortable housing of all being impossible, preference is given to the *best* people; plain folk have to content them with rough lodging; the lowly poor may make effort to sleep on bare floors and earthen passages in some of Bethlehem's dwellings. The two on whom is our thought? Perhaps they arrived last. Perhaps a holy gentleness forbids them the needed importunity, and after unfavourable reply at many doors to their petition for shelter they move on in meek resignation, seeking better

fortune. It may be that Bethlemites who opened their houses at Joseph's knocking, holding up the light to scan him as he stood on the door-step without, and Mary on the pavement behind him, deemed them probably unable to pay for lodging, and for prudential reasons declined to harbour them. Failing to find shelter in all the town, all its doors now closed, all other strangers, with their hosts, being under cover, the pair stand in the cold, dark, silent street. Joseph is sad for Mary's sake; Mary sad for Joseph's sake; both think of——! In the last house where they sought admittance did the mistress of the place, speaking from upper window, say: "There is no room for you"? No room? She spoke truth. She spoke more truth than was in her thought. Not in all the world was there room for One Who was in the cold, dark street that night! Him Whom Mary bore in her chaste womb Heaven and the Heaven of heavens could not contain! The wide world might amplify its mighty reaches to a thousandfold their vastness: He could fill it all, and infinitely more!

The holy couple leave the sleeping town, hoping, it may be, that some wall or fence will afford meagre shelter. They find a cave, so rude and exposed that they feel even outcasts such as they may make bold to usurp the poor shelter it will afford.

In that cave, at the midnight hour, human eyes for the first time looked on God! God had been known to mankind from the beginning; there had been frequent manifestations of His power, justice, and omniscience. With over-mastering sense of awe men witnessed the emptying of Heaven's cataracts in the deluge, and the showering of fire and brimstone on the doomed cities. With fear and trembling the host of Israel encircled the base of Sinai, whilst, amid booming thunders and lightning's dread flashings, the Most High gave the law on its summit. God's august Name was associated in men's minds with manifold striking exhibitions of His power and justice. But before that winter night in Bethlehem no human eye had seen God; then did His two privileged creatures see Him, and they saw Him—a tiny babe! A tiny babe—just

born—smallest and least of humankind, and seeing the tiny babe they saw God! The worlds He had flung out through the bewildering vastness of space looked down upon Him, and beheld enshrined in that infant form the Eternal Power that brought them forth! Celestial bodies shooting arrows of light to millions of miles distance recognised in the infant lying on the floor of that cave Him Who had kindled their ancient fires, and sent them flaming through the vast cycles! Kings and statesmen, sages and orators, artists and toilers, heroes bold and ladies fair—the entire race of man—the hands that made them all were bound in the swathing clothes wound round the Child in that manger of Bethlehem! Oh, wondrous revelation of the Most High! Dogma staggering to the human mind if the human mind be not sustained by strong grace of faith.

Dumb beasts were housed with Him; fed beside Him. See them going to eat from the manger, and, finding it occupied by that small form, turn their gentle eyes on Him as though to ask—Who is this? Ah, brethren, time was to come when He would conceal His Divine Majesty under yet more lowly covering. He was to hide it under the appearance of a small fragment of bread, and before that Eucharistic Bread even the unreasoning beast would kneel in homage!

There were sleeping birds on bushes near to the infant's place of birth. When He, the Eternal, was a few hours old, and they shook slumber from their wings, perhaps they flew to the cave and sang their sweetest songs in gladsome recognition of their Maker. The gentle fish, roaming with silent grace through ocean's solemn deeps—did they on that memorable night swim in eager speed to Palestine's shore, and congregate in myriads near the land which held the manger wherein lay the Child Who gave them all being, and made the watery realm through which they moved?

At far ends of earth, by the Pacific shore of the great western continent, untutored sons of Adam then walked, giant mountains that had stood there since creation overshadowing them. No suspicion had they that He Whose omnipotence sent the life-blood coursing through their

veins, and blew the storms that roared around them, was a new-born babe, child of woman of lowly rank and poor, the child's surroundings poorest and lowliest of all. Is He not, in truth, already that which the prophet king foretold He was to be in the day of His passion—" the outcast of the people "?

See in the morning light farm labourers come to lead the animals from the stable. See our dear St Joseph asking their pardon for that he and his little family are in the way; Mary, by gentle look and mien, making apology too. Perhaps they prepare to take up the infant and leave; those humane sons of toil permit them to stay, so that for some longer space the child has " whereon to lay His head." Those rough men had thought their own lot a hard one. They must have that morning reflected—We're better off than these; and each felt almost wealthy and noble compared with Him Whom they had seen reclining on coarse straw in the ox's manger.

Oh, for the grace of profound and clear contemplation of that scene in the world's history! That tiny form! To Him embattled armies have prayed for victorious strength in deadly combats; to Him, when thunder frights, and ships go down into the deep, and dwellings are wrapt in flames, men pray: O Lord God, protect us! Maker and Ruler of the universe! Guide to every wandering planet! Master of the ceremonial to the sphering worlds that make stately processions round the heavens! Beginning and end of all things! Art Thou, indeed, swathed in bands of helpless infancy? Dost Thou truly lie on coarse straw in the feeding-trough of beasts? Thou art but a few hours old, yet, before Adam was, Thou art! Thy hands, bound now, and after the Eastern swathing fashion, shot back the bolts of Heaven, and emptied the cataracts on the ancient world! Thy face—the face of an infant child, warmed in that cold stable by kindly breath of ox and ass—is the face before which the singing prophet tells the mountains melted as wax! Wherefore do not all the nations flock to Bethlehem to render Thee homage? Wherefore did not the earth quake to its deepest roots at Thy coming? Ought not the sun have risen and illumined all Judea in

that midnight hour when Thou, the Eternal Sun of Justice, didst come to shine on earth? How does this orb revolve on its axis as before when Thou, its Creator, art dwelling upon it in human form? Wherefore do men go on transacting the common concerns of earth and time? Should not a million pealing bells advertise to all the hearts that throb that it is Thou, Sovereign God, Who art in this humble crib, and that it is love for humankind that has placed Thee there?

"He was in the world, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." By express deputation of heavenly messengers two groups of men were led to pay court to the Saviour King. While the world slept that night a band of angels rose up from their stalls in the heavenly choir and prepared to come down and proclaim Him to chosen souls. Those spirits of light had gazed on Him for long ages in His glorious palace above; they had swept their harp-strings, and piped their reeds, and clanged their cymbals, and sung jubilant anthems before His throne. Now, looking down to earth with palpitating wonderment, they see the poor cave and the lowly woman's child. Long centuries back, when angels were young, the Lord had tried their loyalty. He showed them the mystery He had decreed—the Eternal Word in human nature—and bade them adore the Man-God. The hour is come for substantiating the Divine foreshadowing. God made Man they recognise in Bethlehem's lowly babe. Wherefore forth from the pearl gates they rush; down through the skies they wing their way, and over the solemn night they pour their song of praise. As angels well know how, they sing the fact and the purpose of the Divine Child's coming—glory to God in the highest, and holy peace to men. Before the joyful hymn rang out one of the celestial troop made known the opening of the fountain of peace, the birth of the Prince of peace, to shepherds who guarded their flocks on the hillside. No need to tell that with eager hearts and speedy steps those favoured ones made that first pilgrimage to the holy grotto. Their feelings in the Presence who shall describe? In the synagogue they had oft heard, with sense

of awe, the prophecies read aloud which told of Him Who was to come. Simple themselves, and poor, they knew that all the greatest of their race had during long ages looked for the Promised One of God. And this is He! This humble young woman is His mother! Why, their poor children at home are greater than He! Stronger than He! Of more understanding than He! So said bodily sense and natural observation; but grace shone within them, and down to the cavern's floor they bowed in profoundest adoration. Again they adored and wondered; wondered and adored. No infant they had heard of was born in such poor and lowly place. Brethren, do not even children fashion their thought and feeling according to a standard which takes account of human dignity? Does not a poor youth feel humiliating pain if his playmates cry out that his birthplace was the workhouse? Did they ever fling the reproach in a boy's face that he was born in a stable? They might have said that of One! Oh, Lord Jesus Christ! God! Great God! Infinitely great God! Ah! brethren, your children, the children of even the poorest, shall taste joy in the festive days that are approaching because the Son of God became a helpless child in a stable! In all the ages that have since flown by how many homes have been lit up with gladness because of the coming of that babe in the cold, dark, rough cave of Bethlehem! What multitudes of children have donned comfortable new clothing—Christmas gift—and played with bright-coloured toys, and eaten sweet things, and shouted their merry laughter—all because there was a child that winter's night in the dismal cave—puny, poorly clad, lowly, helpless, and He was—God! Brethren, I but spoil it by this inept human speech. Be it said again—Oh! that the grace were given us of profound, clear contemplation of the wondrous thing! Let us gaze upon Him, and again gaze; gaze with calm depth of thought, and—who knows?—the Divine Child may Himself generate good feeling in our hearts, and draw salutary tears from our eyes, and establish loving fidelity in our lives.

Heaven's angels sent the shepherds to Him. A heavenly star led pilgrims of other sort. Consider those

three from far Eastern lands; beautiful is their place in sacred history; impressive the lesson they have transmitted.

The star shone forth. They saw it. Perhaps some unfamiliar hue was in its beam. Were it so or not, whispering from within urged them to follow the intimation in it that pointed westward. By long journey, in that day when long journey was toilsome venture, after many disappointments, with sacrifice to themselves and others, they make their way to the throne-room of the new-born King. Mark, brethren—mark well, for purpose of salutary study—these were men of exalted rank, well used to life of splendour. Luxurious richness of the East was in their dwellings; costly viands were their daily food. On camels draped with gorgeous trappings they rode to Bethlehem; imposing train of attendants accompanied them, bearing magnificent gifts to be presented to the King of the Jews on their arrival at His palace. They have arrived. The star stays its mysterious course, and sheds its significant beam on—a stable! where, bound in swathing bands of infancy, amid lowly surroundings, lies the object of their long and laboured search! Let us place ourselves in their position. Our ideas and feelings being what they are, think, brethren, that you have made the journey they made, with the hopes they cherished, those hopes quivering with ever-increasing sensation as, day by day, they came nearer to Him for Whom many generations had looked and sighed and prayed! Stayed at length by the celestial guide, they behold the flood of the star's light converge on a rude cave! Try to fancy your amaze, brethren, were you in the Magi's place. Thinking on the average fashion of heart amongst us, fancy something besides amaze. Would you have deigned to approach the threshold of the cave? Did you approach and see that which was to be seen from there, would you have entered? Would you not, rather, have felt that you had been played upon? That merry-making friend, or unkind neighbour, or malevolent enemy had devised an illusion to bring upon you trouble and ridicule, the star being trick wrought by Eastern magic to serve the purpose of mocking you? Would you not—

be it remembered, I suppose our ordinary ideas and feelings and ways—would you not, after disdainful glance at the poor people in the stable, have, with stern voice, bidden your attendants to turn your camels' heads around, and faced for your distant home, nursing wounded pride? The men from the East who did really dismount at that stable door were not, fortunately for them, what are called "sensible" men; they were something better—they were *wise* men. In their wisdom they permitted the grace of faith to act upon them. Some degree of common sense and self-respect whispered, perhaps, to them—cried aloud to them, it may be, as they would have cried aloud to us—that it was a foolish thing to stay. The erring sense of human dignity, proud independence in the use of their judgment, the evil thing which makes bad Catholics, and of bad Catholics makes infidels, asked within them: "How shall we look if people from the town beyond come and see us in this extraordinary place, and in these absurd circumstances? How shall it be with us if word get back to our country that our laborious journey has brought us to a stable, to find a poor working-man and his wife, and an infant lying in the manger beside beasts of the field?" Oh, that glorious three! Oh, their example to all generations of men! Dearly beloved, reason's proper craving had been satisfied in them by the compelling significance of the wondrous star. Then, they being *wise* men, reason, in its reasonableness, bade them surrender themselves to the Unseen Power of Whose working on them they were given sufficient assurance. Therefore did they see in the adult pair within the cave the two greatest of human creatures! The infant child—He might be to all other Gentiles foolishness, and to the Jews in the town near-by a stumbling-block—to them, whom He had graciously called, He was the power of God, and the wisdom of God, and, falling down, they adored Him! When many acts of faith and love had been made, methinks they must have said amongst themselves—It is good for us to be here, let us here make three tabernacles, and stay for ever. But the Divine Child had otherwise ruled. They went back to their country; they lived for Him; they died for Him; then

made journey to Him again, to go back no more—they kneel before Him now in Heaven.

Let us turn brief glance on Nazareth. St Jerome records a tradition that Our Lady and her holy spouse had for some time a little girl to help in domestic work. Women of the congregation, do I hear you express envy of that privileged maid, honoured above fair princesses and majestic queens? She held in her arms Him Whose arms held all creation! She took turn, it may have been, in guiding and aiding the early attempts to walk of the strong, living God, on Whose boundless resource the whole world leans! Did she, with Mary's gracious permission, take part in teaching Him to speak? The Eternal Word of the Father, Whose lordly voice, sounding through the abyss of ancient nothing, brought forth the universe! Did she know Who He was? She knows now: surely she is in Heaven. How she looks upon Him now! Wonderment—ever-freshening wonderment—rapturous wonderment—is hers as she recognises in the King of Glory the child she once cared and helped!

In those earthly days of hers, as that favoured one held Him in her arms at the door of the holy house, a needy orphan passing by may have stayed her step and sought charitable assistance. If the young maiden hesitated to give, the eyes of Jesus may have turned to her, and, if He had been sufficiently taught the art of speech, His Divine voice may have said—Give to the orphan for My sake. If she gave she rejoices over it now. Of this congregation the orphans in St Joseph's Institution ask an alms to-day. The babe of Bethlehem asks you to aid them. You, brethren, having contemplated the Divine Child, be like the Magi in this: offer Him the myrrh of humble sorrow for all you have done against Him; offer Him frankincense, the prayer of thankful admiration; offer Him the gold of your contribution to the little ones who appeal to you in His name.

THE CHURCH OF GOD—THE CHURCH OF THE CROSS.

PREACHED AT BLESSING OF HOLY CROSS CHURCH, BELFAST, *Pentecost Day*, 1902.

MAY it please your Eminence: my Lords, Very Rev. Fathers, and dearest faithful in Christ—

We have opened on this solemn day of Pentecost, a Church of the Holy Cross. Nigh two thousand years ago, on the first Christian Pentecost, they opened in God's chosen city of Jerusalem a Church of the Holy Cross. Christ's Church, sprung from His side as He expired on the Cross, enriched with the graces He purchased for her by His Cross, signed, under God's permitting providence, by man's malevolence, with sign of the Cross—on this festal day was she formally launched upon the world. We contemplated her this morning in the prerogatives wherewith she was equipped by her Divine Founder. Let us now look upon her encompassed by the evils wherewith man's hate has visited her.

Children come into the world bearing upon them the physical characteristics of their parents. The Church on her natal day shared the Cross of Him from Whom she came. In the very hour when she stood forth to deliver her message of salvation to men her Supreme Pontiff, Peter, Vicar of Christ, was seized upon and flung into prison. An angel of the Lord delivered him when the prayers of the faithful ascended to Heaven on His behalf. After they had, in a few years of preaching, scattered the Divine seed of the Gospel, Peter and all the Apostles were smitten by rude enemies, and in violent deaths did they attest their loyalty to the Master Who had sent them.

The twelve first pastors and ministers of the Church,

dying, left to their successors the deposit of revealed doctrine which had been entrusted to them. They transmitted, likewise, the mark of their Master's Cross. There rose up in deadly war against the infant Church the greatest human power the world ever beheld—the power of imperial Rome. Empire of towering majesty, with philosophic brain to guide the strong arm that held its stout sword; dread power, before whose all-conquering legions brave armies went down as does the corn before the sickle; the Roman Empire, in the plentitude of its might, rose up to destroy the Church of Jesus Christ. Not content with employing the extreme resources of her ingenuity and formidable power, she requisitioned for her combat with Christianity the claws and fangs of the dread wild beasts from Eastern forest and jungle. Look, brethren, with fancy's eye, on Flavian's mighty amphitheatre, that storied spot which, till sound of doomsday trumpet, shall be associated with memory of the brave ones who suffered for Christian truth. Behold the vast building, impressive monument of bygone splendour. Seated tier above tier, on encircling galleries, were nigh a hundred thousand Roman citizens, all arrayed as for a feast. In the midst, robed in dazzling splendour, sat imperial Cæsar beneath the golden eagle which symbolised the power and pomp of the proud mistress of the nations. It was paganism in its grandest parade, about to strike a hated foe. The hated foe was the Church of God; her representative in that hour an old man whom soldiers led into the arena. He knelt. There was naught about him that the great Roman Empire need have feared. There was nothing to render him the object of that assembly's hate; he was in the enfeeblement of age; he could harm none in that human throng; he wished ill to no man; he clasped his hands in prayer for self and for the multitude around. Yet was rabid hate on every countenance which looked from the lofty benches as they sent forth the thundering cry: "The Christian to the lions!" At given signal keepers threw open the massive gates of subterranean cages; with a roar that shook the mighty walls and brought pallor to the cheeks even of those seated in secure place above, there bounded into the

arena the dread wild beasts—the majestic lion from Nubian forest, the fierce tiger from Indian jungle, the treacherous panther—the terrors of brute creation. For brief space, enjoying their new-given liberty, they raced in wild frolic round the sanded pit, then espied the human figure kneeling in the midst. Crouching for an instant's preparation, they sprang upon the aged creature, and in furious emulation smashed and tore the feeble frame, devoured his flesh, drank his blood and crunched his bones, leaving on the red sands but meagre remnants of the man that had been. That white-haired, decrepit, gentle old man represented the Church which God had established on earth. She was a power—it is true—but a power unto grace and love for mankind. Therefore did Rome's imperial power, which was the power of human passion, make onslaught upon her, and smite unto death the man who embodied her faith and purpose.

The endeavour of the great Empire to destroy the Church failed. That proud Empire itself fell to ruins. But the spirit of evil ever lives; therefore was continuance of hostility to the Church inevitable. The original policy of brute force became somewhat discredited. With advancing centuries softer form of warfare was seen, but proceeding from the same satanic inspiration as the ancient efforts of fire and blood; bitter harassing the Church experienced after the Empire's fall, and through the Middle Ages. The barbarian hordes which rushed like devastating tempests from northern fastnesses and swept away the Rome of the Cæsars, soon bowed their necks to the Church's yoke and entered her fold. But the taint of heresy came on many of them, and fervid hostility to her did they long display. Then marched against the Church a formidable host under the standard of Islam. Once more her children's blood flowed by the sword of the fanatical power whose track was soon marked by the ruins of strong and fair cities and towns. Next arose trouble from an enemy within the gates. Rulers of the new Empire set up in central Europe, calling themselves her sons, brought many a tear to the Church's eyes, and made her condition a joy to her enemies.

At length, when for long beyond a thousand years the Church had scarce known breathing space, there came upon her the cataclysm of the sixteenth century. Then was war which, for wide extent of attack, for radical evil significance, and threatening of dire calamity to God's interests among men, surpassed all that previous times had witnessed. Scene of dread horror was it, brethren, when not many days since dwellers on that West Indian island heard the mighty roar sent forth from the mysterious bosom of the mountains; saw the sky ablaze with electric discharges, then cyclone of fire and steam rush at lightning speed on the fated town and the anchored vessels in the bay. What were men's feelings when, in fullness of day, all light of sun disappeared, and midnight darkness lowered over them? Then did large stones and fire rain upon them; madly rushing—they knew not whither—they dropped as dead flies drop. Whirlwind of fire was the very breath they inhaled; fleeing from the fire, drawn in with every breathing, they plunged for relief into the sea. But the very sea was at boiling heat, and appalling the victorious ravages of death on thousands, on tens of thousands! Whilst we live this life of sense such a tragedy transcends our faculty of horror. But to angels of Heaven the horror seen in the eruption of lying and wickedness in the religious revolt of the sixteenth century was unspeakably worse. It was Hell belching forth abomination; it was a whirlwind on which demons sat astride, and which swept unnumbered souls of men into the dismal dungeons below, where they shall not die, but shall live amid rain of fire for ever!

That spiritual cyclone rushed to overwhelm this motherland of ours. A power greater than satanic power rolled back the tide of steam and mud and fire which threatened our spiritual ruin. Then, because gracious Providence had preserved us from the destruction which Satan had devised, the Evil One did unto us as he had done to those sainted servants of God whom, failing to avert from prayerful union with the Most High, he beat with cruel stripes. The demon of heretical falsehood drew the sword of flesh against us, and dark and evil days came on this brave old race for its

loyalty to the Church of Jesus Christ. Our Emerald Isle became the modern amphitheatre where the power of evil waged the same war against the Church as had been witnessed of old in the storied Coliseum. A fair young maid, or a poor old man, who had harmed nobody, merely because the young maid or the old man believed what the Divine Spirit had revealed, assisted at the celebration of Holy Mass, fed on the adorable Body of the Lord Jesus, prayed to His Immaculate Mother, and acknowledged the authority which God's Own Son had conferred on the Pope of Rome—merely for this the unoffending one was hanged and drawn and quartered by the ministers of the power of evil.

Notable change has come. The spirit of wickedness seems to have learned that the rude policy of war against the Church is not the most effective. That spirit of wickedness has, outside the Chinese Empire, sheathed the sword, extinguished the flaming brand, and cast the torturing rack aside. It has donned the toga of the statesman, the cap and gown of the university professor, the sock and buskin of the actor. It has taken in hand the pen of the essayist, the novelist, the journalist. The rounded periods of the orator, the graceful verse of the poet, the blustering of the demagogue—these are the arms wielded against the Church in latter days.

But all the evil that assails the Church in our time may be taken as drawing inspiration, consciously or unconsciously, from the fell society whose black shadow lowers over the modern world: Freemasonry. Our adversary, the Devil, in what concerns the Church in general, as distinct from individual souls, scarce needs any longer to go about seeking whom he may devour. Having bred the Masonic Society, he can retire to his nether kingdom, and leave to his dutiful servants of the compass and square the mission of contending against God and against His Church.

The divinely authorised Teacher of us all, the Supreme Pontiff of Christendom, has laid it down as the duty of Catholics "to tear from Masonry the mask with which it hides itself, and to show it to the world just as it is." Masonry has gathered into itself all the open hate of the

Church to be found on earth. Every enemy of hers is welcomed into its fold, and equipped with the expedite and effective means of striving to execute his evil intent against her. That dark Society is the Synagogue of Satan; he has incarnated himself in Masonry. Unto partial fulfilment of what the Holy See has declared to be the duty of Catholics—the unmasking of Masonry—I invite your thought to a circular issued by the rulers of the Society in the year 1890. Hear unblushing presentation of its purpose contained therein: "Masonry aims at rescuing men's minds from the slavery to which the dogmas and prescriptions of the Catholic Church reduce them." Having suggested practical methods for realising that aim, the document proceeds: "If those means be carried out they will hasten the arrival of the day when *from the ruins of religion* nationalism will intone the canticle of the liberation. Then man will no longer busy himself about anything save securing here below that happiness which some dreamers promise themselves in another life. We recommend in an especial manner to the brethren to prevent, as far as possible, the baptism of infants. Let us disparage and discourage all that has a religious character!" A mere man, devoid of faith, could be understood were he to counsel parents not to concern themselves about the baptism of children, regarding it as useless ceremony; but that masonic circular calls on them to prevent the baptism of children! Man of no faith values no baptism as much as he values baptism; is indifferent to baptism; takes no steps to procure baptism. It requires a devil to prevent baptism. And as Masonry seeks to prevent baptism, Masonry is of the Devil. Ten years after the issue of that circular a congress of lodges was held in Paris. One of the speakers made reference to the education of the young as a field whereon it was desirable to war against the Church. Here, ye Christian people, the words that were listened to with approval by that assembly of the infernal Society. "We must recast our educational programme, and must tear out that shameful page whereon a divine morality is still prescribed to the schoolmasters of France!" Finally, I shall dare to read lurid extract

from a speech delivered in the year 1880 by one who is at this moment a member of the French Government. A feast of one of the lodges was being held. I said I should dare to read certain words for you; the author of the work whence I cite them did not dare to render them into English. Probably no section of the air which pervades the world ever vibrated to such sounds except the air which satanic influence has corrupted. At that impious feast, this man, now one of the ministers who govern the French Republic, spoke thus: "We must crush the vile wretch; and the vile wretch—it is not clericalism; it is God!" Did I speak aright, brethren, when I called Freemasonry the Synagogue of Satan?

Say not, professional man or seller of wares in Belfast or Dublin, that your Masonry has none of this spirit and aim. Plead not with the ecclesiastical authority which condemns you, or with the Catholic fellow-citizen on whose money you would live, that yours is but a friendly brotherhood, designed for good to yourself, and harm to no man or institution, least of all to the Christian religion, of which, perhaps, you would have us think you a member. Gaze upon the woodman when with brawny arm he uplifts the axe to fell the forest oak. When the blow has fallen, which portion of the axe breaks the bark and enters the trunk of the tree? The edge, you reply, and rightly; it is the edge of the axe that cuts the tree. But were there edge and nothing more, would it cut the tree? No. It is something behind; it is the coherent mass of many molecules which constitute the stout hinder part that gives the momentum which sends the sharp edge piercing through the timber. In the solemn tragedy which occupies our thought the sharp edge of the axe is the Minister of State in France, Italy, or Portugal who drafts the project of law against the Church. But the ponderous mass behind which supplies the strength of the impact is made up of the banded millions all the world over whom the Society numbers on its register. The Masonic Government which binds, tortures, and crucifies the Holy Lord in France is emboldened by sense of the wide-extending brotherhood which it feels at its back.

Two methods there are for taking the life of one's fellow-man. Violent attack may be made: when this method is followed with success, the man is said to have been *killed*, and they who did the deed are said to have *killed* him. The other method employs no violence. One needs but to poison the atmosphere which the man breathes. Taking into the lungs day after day the tainted air he soon loses vigour of health; the bloom gradually fades from his cheek; the once bounding step begins to flag; he becomes weaker and ever weaker, and in time dies. No one is charged with having murdered him; it is not said that he has been killed. Yet has he been as effectively done to death as though stroke of rude hand had killed him straight away. So is there twofold fashion of assailing the Church and the sacred interests she has been appointed to promote. In portions of the continent of Europe the Evil One makes open assault upon her, and our Catholic hearts are stirred to grief and indignation. But masonry seeks to send radiations of destructive influence to all parts of earth where there are souls to be injured. In every legislative assembly the world over it employs the impiety of the impious man, seconded by the stupidity of the stupid man, and the cowardice of the cowardly man, to frame laws adverse to religion, or obstruct measures that are favourable. Not many days have gone since an Elementary Education Bill was debated in the British Parliament. Figure to yourselves, brethren, the immense distance some minds have travelled from truth and right, seeing that men blushed not to stand up in the Westminster Senate House and ask with pretence of honest indignation: "Is it to be tolerated that the State shall teach religion?" Reading that query of ignorance, or malice, or blend of the two, one inclined to say: Oh, for one hour of immortal Dan O'Connell! Oh, for the Christian hero—to uplift his giant frame from one of those benches, shake his massy locks, flash his eagle eye, and with the thunder of his glorious voice make the walls of St Stephen's echo to the expression of the orthodox thought and feeling of a Christian man! They would have heard from him that the State *must* teach religion; must teach religion at least in the negative sense that she may

not dare to place impediment in the way of its being taught; that by her obligation to promote the commonweal she must facilitate the teaching of religion by those whose proper office it is to teach it. If those members of the British Parliament who have entered on apprenticeship to French freemasonry wish that the State should not teach religion at all—be it so. Let the State stand aside, and let the Church teach religion. But since it is for the people's good the Church must teach religion, let the needful aid from the people's purse be placed in the Church's hands that she may effectively do so.

In wise solicitude, brethren, be the question asked: Is there war against the Church, quiet, but real, amongst us nearer home? Is there amongst us an opposition of wrong to right, and, seeing that this is everywhere, is there a steady prevailing of wrong against right in this old land? Are the solemn interests for assertion of which the Church exists in as bright a condition as they were? Has the Almighty as much influence in Ireland as He once had? Some good men comfort themselves by noting certain statistics of religious activity. With the spread of pious confraternities there is increased periodic approach to the Lord's table by organised bodies of the faithful. But let thoughtful observation reveal the true state of things. Wrong is bolder amongst us than it used to be. Perhaps relaxation of the penal laws led to relaxation of attitude of salutary vigilance on the people's part. More association with heretics in social, commercial, and official life has come about. Diminished harassing by them has, it may be, led not a few to think of religious error with unsafe liberality. Again, when it is a small and poor country that has faith, and a great, wealthy country near at hand has not faith, then unless alert combating against open persecution keep the good spirit alive, there is risk of adopting some of the undesirable ways of the great, wealthy neighbour. The questionable sports, dress, reading, and social amusements of fashionable unbelief may be imitated, or at least sighed after, by humble orthodoxy. This mental attitude reached, the edge of the poor country's Catholicity is blunted. Thirdly, the criminal injustice which powerful

heresy long inflicted on us in the matter of the people's education could scarce fail to produce harmful result. We have amongst Irish Catholics, thanks to that criminal injustice, less hatred of religious wrong; less appreciation of religious truth; less sensitiveness as to spiritual perils. Time was in Catholic Ireland—and many here remember it—when in the southern and western province, if a wicked man, or a company of wicked men, set up a structure on a railway platform in order that innocent children dropping a "penny in the slot" might endanger their souls by looking at an immodest picture, a band of servants of Jesus Christ from the nearest town or hamlet would rush with sacred fury, as the lioness rushes when her cubs are attacked, would smash into a hundred fragments that machine of Satan, and inspire with wholesome terror the railway company which tolerated the nefarious institution. That day has gone, and a great deal of God's grace has gone with it. Children whom the Church pressed to her bosom, and who nestled there in sweet peace, have relaxed the clasp of their arms round her neck, and are withdrawing themselves; men who recognised her for loving mother, and smiled on her with filial joy, are becoming cold.

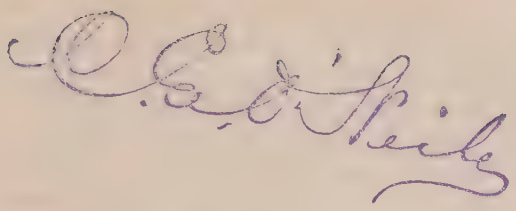
Further saddening symptom—are not some amongst us becoming—what shall I call it? jealous? yes, jealous of the Church, and, because jealous, suspicious, unfriendly towards her? They shrug their shoulders and mutter complaint when she issues authoritative directions; when avowed enemies strike a blow at her they almost exhibit some manner of approval; they catch up and repeat echoes of hostile cries against her; they give money to assist her foes by purchasing the books of impudent scientists and unclean novelists who write against her, and against the sacred cause she has been set up to champion. To see the attitude I have named jealousy, consider this, brethren. For many months past the country has had its attention drawn to the question of a projected law to supply university education to the Catholics of Ireland. In the course of discussion of the subject some members of the Church, men who seemed to possess normal judgment, and who received the Sacra-

ments with becoming frequency, stated in express words that in this matter of high education bishops and priests have one interest and the laity another! Now, to say that the Church has one interest in the education question, and the people another, is truth, and is mischievous falsehood. It is true that ecclesiastics shall, naturally, busy themselves mainly with the religious element in education, whilst laymen, trusting the religious element to the Church, turn their active concern to the secular department. But it is mischievous falsehood, and stupid falsehood, to contend that while bishops and priests have an interest in the people's education, laymen have an interest in the same opposed to the interests of the Church. For the primary school, for intermediate school, for the university—for all educational enterprise—what is the interest of the Church? Is it not the people's eternal welfare? And where dwells the wrong-headed man who shall dare to seriously assert that the laity have an interest opposed to that? Whereunto did God make man? For Heaven! The workingman, the doctor of medicine, the lawyer, the artist, the commander of armies, the Minister of State, the monarch of the realm; why are they all on earth? To know, love, and serve God, and reach enjoyment of Him for ever hereafter. That Divinely ordained purpose overshadows a man completely. And whereunto does the Church exist? A child will tell it: to further the eternal interest of the people. So that, brethren, our interest and your first, last, and chief interest are one and indivisible.

All harassing of the Church must bring sorrow to us whom kind Providence has made her children, and who hope to reach eternal life through her ministrations. Yet may we preach unto ourselves patience in the trials to which religion is subjected—"Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid." More than patience should we cherish. Be this glad thought before us, brethren: hatred of the Church, the fervid endeavour of earth and Hell to destroy her, is gladsome assurance that she is, indeed, the Church of the Living God. The Church of the Holy Cross is the Church of Jesus Christ. Did He not say: "You shall be hated by all men for My sake?" Yet more did the Divine

Master say, a startling thing, encouraging and uplifting to all whom wicked war on the Church grieves: "Wonder not if the world hate you; it hath hated Me before you!" He came for men's good; nevertheless, men hated Him. The leading men hated Him, the learned men hated Him, and those of influence deluded the multitude, ever ready for delusion, into hating Him. Though He was the Innocent One, the Gentle One, the Benevolent One, the All-Holy One, Supreme Lord of the world, they put Him to death!

Therefore, "let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid." Believing in the Church, let us hope in, and for the Church. On solemn voucher of Heaven's protection is this our Christian hope based. When she is face to face with the enemy of blood and fire, let us hope. When she encounters the disputatious enemy, let us hope. When enemy of insulting jeer would discredit her, let us hope. Should they utter the contemptuous taunt: She is an old-fashioned institution; away with her! let us make answer: Old-fashioned? aye, so are sun, moon, and stars old-fashioned. And bounteous earth which, through the revolving centuries, yields sustenance to mankind, is an old-fashioned institution. Should the same jeering spirit cry out: Your Church is of yesterday—we have warrant to reply: Aye, and she shall be of to-morrow. "Unto the consummation of ages" are the terms divinely uttered of her life and mission and heavenly protection, and not even the very gates of Hell shall prevail against her. On this blessed day was vouchsafed unto her Pentecostal distillation of the Holy Ghost, giving her a principle of undying life, and guarantee of a triumph that shall be for ever.



ST PATRICK—IRELAND'S SIGNAL BENEFACTOR.

PREACHED AT THE DEDICATION OF ST PATRICK'S CHURCH, TRIM, *12th October*, 1902.

"In those days, I, John, saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men; and He will dwell with them. And they shall be His people, and God Himself with them shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away. And He that sat on the throne said: Behold I make all things new." (Apoc. xxi.)

MAY it please your Eminence—My Lords, Very Rev. Fathers, and dearest faithful in Christ—That which is done here to-day offers matter for deep thought and stimulus to lively religious emotions. This the more if it be considered with certain striking circumstances which attach to it.

The bishop of the diocese has just blessed and offered to the Most High this Church which a faithful people have built. It is the parochial Church of Trim. It is presented to God under the invocation of our National Apostle. The oblation is made on the feast of the Dedication of the Churches of Ireland. What attitude of mind and feeling does all this suggest to the thoughtful Christian observer?

The eyes look upon this beauteous edifice, fresh from the builder's hand; they witness the solemn ceremonial that is being done; the ears catch the sounds of jubilant praise which the choir pours out; the mind knows that a new Church is being made over to the Lord's service in the historic town of Trim, a Church which shall be named

after the great St Patrick; that it is opened for public worship on the day when commemoration is made of all the venerable fanes wherein the Creator has been honoured in our land from the beginning. Does there not come upon one a dream of days long gone by? And, rapt in that dream, may we not, like the seer of Patmos, gaze upon the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God; the new Jerusalem, the "Vision of Peace," the beauteous Church of the Lord—the saving faith of Jesus Christ coming to our land through the agency of the glorious man from whom this new-made Temple takes its title!

And if the query should rise to the lips: What does that Vision of Peace import? What good thing came to our race when that Church of God, that Faith of the Lord Jesus, was sent down out of Heaven upon us? be the answer given in the inspired words: It was the "Tabernacle of God with men"—it was the coming of God to dwell with us, and our being constituted His people.

Words easily spoken. They mean a revelation of Divine bounty which might occupy the thought of a lifetime.

As members of the Church, we are in what the Holy Book styles God's "admirable light." He called us from darkness—pagan darkness. What pagan darkness means we must fail to understand. Encompassed through all our reasoning life by the light of faith and the manifold associations which belong to faith, we lack almost the initial conditions for picturing to ourselves the spiritual misery of a pagan land, such as was ours before the day of her "visitation." No supernatural grace; no supernatural light such as abounds amongst us, even amongst the thoughtless children who play in our streets. God to be served; souls to be saved; yet no clear knowledge of God among the people, for where supernatural grace operates not, clouds arising from men's hearts obscure even the natural knowledge of the Creator. No knowledge of the Incarnation with its wondrous exhibition of Divine love and mercy. In suffering, which men experienced then as now, no soothing such as religion alone

can give. Furthermore, in a pagan nation human passions held almost undisputed sway over men. What this involves is hard for us to fancy. Pagan countries in our day are in large degree under the influence of Christianity. Christian ideals have overstepped the borders of Christian kingdoms, so that individuals and nations devoid of faith in God and His revealed religion are yet largely governed by that religion in their attitude of thought, in their social relations, and in State politics. Public decorum and softness of manners are found even where belief in a higher world exists not. But in distant times, in countries to which no influence of the Divine Saviour's religion had penetrated, paganism meant the subjection of private and public life to the evil passions of the human breast. Where grace was not, to curb and elevate, nature ruled, and it was fallen nature. Fallen nature is a wild beast; in triumphant paganism the wild beast was master. Lust was as a raging flood; self-love bred widespread hate, strife and almost perpetual bloodshed. We know of men that sat on thrones in pagan days whose fitting place would be the dungeon. Well—pagan this island of ours once was. Doubtless in that day her verdant plains smiled in their beauty as now; graceful mountains adorned her as now; her rivers flowed down to the sea amid fair landscapes as we behold them to-day. Antrim's rock-bound coast bade defiance to the angry waves; Killarney's lakes and dells had already donned their robe of loveliness. Men were brave; women were beautiful; children played on the village green and chased the butterflies in the gladsome sun. But, over all the land, there was none of the life and beauty of God's holy grace. No Temple of the Most High; no figure of the Holy Lord on His Cross; no smiling image of the Heavenly Mother or of dear St Joseph. There was sin; its stain and burden were on souls; but no confessional where the sinner could find pardon and peace. No Tabernacle enclosing the Sacred Heart of our Lord, before which the sorrow-stricken might kneel in humble trust and pray for strengthening consolation. No comforting sacraments in one's dying hour. All bitter wounds incidental to mortal life men's

hearts were liable to, and none of Gilead's balm from holy religion was there to heal them. Dearest brethren, there was worse than all this. Herein was the crowning evil of our country in her pagan time—she had no hope of eternal life! There is darkness in the night; but mornings sunbeams we know will come. There is depressing pain in bodily ailment; but we are assured it will end. Supreme horror of human life is when, with its manifold miseries around us, the future holds no brightening hope. Our forefathers were shut out from the gladsome inheritance of eternal bliss.

But see the "Vision of Peace," the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven. Looking back upon the land overshadowed by the cloud of pagan misery, see one bright spot. Flocks are grazing on Antrim's hills and a boy, aged fifteen, tends them. He is a slave. Slave? In all the land he alone is free! The multitude around are in Satan's bands; his is the "liberty of the glory of the children of God." Fix the eyes of the mind upon him. Child of Destiny was he. In his youthful personality was the eternal fate of us all wrapped up. The angels' eyes that scan the world in Divine interest scarce find vigorous faith in all the wide world to-day beyond what that shepherd boy gave. The hand that fed the flock on the sloping sides of Slemish was the hand that has opened Heaven to countless millions of the Irish race, to multitudes in Great Britain, in vast America and Australia. Fix your eyes upon him, brethren. See him as he weeps; see him as he prays. He looks upon the bright flowers that grow around in summer-time, and he weeps that no flowers of Christian holiness adorned the people's souls. He sees the lambkins gambolling over the plains, and sighs because the Lamb of God, immolated for the world's peace, was unknown to the nation. He escaped from slavery; went over the seas; studied for the priesthood; was made bishop; then, with authorisation of the vicar of Jesus Christ, came back to Erin's shore, bearing his message from God.

"Royal Meath" shall for ever have the glory of being the scene of his first striking advertising to long-established

paganism of the Divine power of Christian truth. Let them set down as landmark in the world's spiritual history the hour when, looking from Tara's heights towards the hill of Slane, the pagan king saw a beam of light from the paschal fire enkindled by Patrick's hand. The startled monarch, consulting his Druid priests, received oracular reply. As Caiaphas, evil man and blind, spoke inspired truth in the council of the Lord's enemies, so did the Druids in the pagan court of Tara when they declared to their royal master that if the fire they saw were not put out before morning it would never be extinguished, and that "the man who had enkindled it would be exalted above princes and kings." Nero, Rome's proud Emperor, borne once in stately procession through the Imperial City, is said to have seen, amidst the thousands who lined the ways, a man of the poor, rude in appearance and aged, who had mounted a large stone to see the monarch pass by. Their eyes met. The old man was a Galilean named Peter. Nero's throne fell, and in its stead Peter raised a throne which has stood, and shall for ever stand. The pride and pomp of pagan power in the person of King Laoghaire on Tara's hill saw the servant of Christ come before him in simplicity, bearing his pastoral staff and cross. And pagan pomp and power went down before the word of the great Apostle and the bountiful grace of the Most High.

My Lords, Rev. Fathers, and brethren, let the world bear with us if on every apt occasion we feast our souls on the sovereign good then bestowed upon our motherland, and magnify the Lord for His gracious "visitation." The land was "void and empty," like the earth in primeval chaos, but "the spirit of God moved over the waters" through the ministry of the great Apostle. Then was established the "Tabernacle of God with men" in Ireland. The Lord became our God, and we His people. There was flashed upon the people the knowledge of God Who made them; the knowledge of their eternal destiny; of His Holy Law, of the Incarnation—that mystery of amazing love and mercy; they heard of the Precious Blood; they were given the Sacraments whereby its influence is brought

to individual souls. Oh! dearly beloved, think upon the shock of holy joy men received when it was taught them that a man who had forfeited his Creator's friendship, and merited thereby unending punishment, could, by sorrowfully acknowledging his wrongdoing to the priest, obtain the Divine forgiveness and restoration to the unspeakable good of God's friendship! And this, with voucher, through the Apostle's preaching and the inward action of grace, that it was the very wisdom of the Most High Himself that had revealed the mystery of mercy. More exalted blessing still—Patrick gave to the nation that had grovelled in the earthly misery of unbelief the grand secret of faith. He had brought the ruddy wine with him over the sea; he took simple bread made with hands; over that bread and wine he spoke words which God appointed him to speak, and lo! by his transubstantiating power they were changed into the true Body and Blood of the world's Redeemer, God made man! And here again the Gospel preaching of the holy man and the inward working of the grace of faith on the people's hearts effected gladsome assurance that the prodigy had been revealed by God's unerring word. Would we know what good thing came to us when the glorious Apostle touched our shore and went through the Green Isle? Would you know what precious thing came up the Boyne water to Trim on the memorable day when the "beautiful feet" of him who brought the "gospel of peace" first trod the streets of your historic town? Ask the unnumbered thousands who have since then felt the heavy sorrows of life weigh on their hearts, and have found patient strength in their faith in God and their loving trust in the Blessed Mother of God. Ask them who, when the persecutor went raging through the land to visit with death the crime of loyalty to God, undaunted stood before him, like the Maccabees of old, and bared their bosoms to the ruthless sword, for love of the treasure which Patrick had given. Ask the aged hero, Walter Evers, a magistrate of this county, who two hundred and fifty years ago lay on a bed of sickness not far from the very ground we now stand on. In his declining age he had been stricken with palsy. By order

of the blood-thirsty heretic who was governor of Trim, the soldiery tore him from his dying bed, flung him on a cart, and bore him into your town. Ask him why, when his snow-white hair waved in the breeze, and his palsied limbs shook and his aged eyes saw the gibbet they had erected, and he knew that one word of denial of the Holy Gospel of Christ would have saved him—why did he stand firm as a rock in Catholic profession, and let them hang him in the public street? Ask Eleanor Cusack, who, when a hundred years had bowed her frame, was seized by the garrison of Trim. Ask her wherefore, when they set a circle of dried straw and faggots round about her shrivelled body and set them on fire, she wavered not in her allegiance to the ancient creed, but let them burn her to blackened cinder? Ask any one from thousands of the sort in our own day—the woman whose life is all overclouded, whose husband lies ill in comfortless cabin, whose children are weak for hunger, to whom some fresh announcement of trial is brought, and then another, and yet another—ask her by what astounding feat of the human heart she meets her bitter lot with calm, as she speaks the sublime philosophy: "Welcome be the Holy Will of God!" Ask the Irishman who, in the extreme of bodily weakness, dying, having opened his parched lips to receive His Loving Saviour, having felt the welcome hand of the priest placing the holy oil upon him, awaits without fear, with serene peace in his heart and word of prayer upon his lips, the summons of the Judge. Ask all these what blessed gift was ours when the chosen Apostle came and won this territory to God. Brethren, it was the pledge of eternal good he brought; he showed our privileged race the way to life and honour and peace that endure for ever.

A great nation St Patrick made Ireland. Through him came all the greatness on which Irishmen's memory can proudly rest. Ireland was great, according to the thought of civilised Europe, when from the fullness of her high and holy treasures she shared the grace of God and elevating science with all the nations. Far greater may we judge, before the heavenly witness, when, in the dark hour of trial, she bravely defended her celestial heritage,

One radical dogma of Christian faith our Apostle had burned into the brain and heart of his people. Having taught them truth, he taught them the conserving principle of truth—obedience to the authority and guidance of Peter. When Heaven's call to evangelise us had come to him, he prayed: "Grant, O Lord, that I may go to the city of holy Rome and that, receiving authorisation there, I may preach Thy name and Thy faith and Thy love to the Irish race." And the Book of Armagh hands down to us his pastoral exhortation—"As ye are Christians, so be ye Romans." This radical dogma the spirit of heresy sought to uproot from the soil of our country's religious belief. To that dogma, through ages of bondage and slaughter, our country clung with brave loyalty. In vindication of it she saw the blood of her children flow in torrents, and many a holy fane raised up for testimony of her strong faith laid in ruin.

Behold, brethren, fragments from the wreck within your very town walls. Time was when Trim held honourable place in the Church of Ireland. Regarded by some historians as the first spot whereon our great Apostle founded an episcopal see, it became in ages long since past a notable centre of religious activity. It had its Franciscan friary; its Dominican friary; its Greek Church; its several chantries: all have disappeared. It had St Patrick's Church, which the religion founded by Martin Luther and Henry VIII. and Elizabeth appropriated. There was the great Abbey of Our Lady, majestic even in its ruin, the towering "Yellow Steeple." At Newtown, well nigh us, were the Priory of Canons Regular, with the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul attached, and the Priory of St John the Baptist for Crutched Friars. Gaze upon those picturesque remnants, those souvenirs of the olden time. They were the material enshrinement of the people's faith, and the laboratories of saving grace in the past. The material incasing is broken; the body is slain; but, blest be the Lord! the soul that vivified it is with us still—our Christian faith, the proud victory which overcame the heretical foe. To-day one can almost fancy a sense of joy in those venerable ruins. Long have they

stood in desolate grandeur. That yellow steeple—how many a cradle it has seen rocked in the town beneath! To how many a marriage bell it has listened! How many a funeral procession it has witnessed go forth to the hallowed burial place at Newtown Priory! How many who played as children beneath its towering vastness have ripened and aged and gone long since into the tomb. But it may be that to-day a spirit that haunts it shares our joy. Standing in its shadow last night I thought—could it speak, would it not bid welcome to the new and stately fane it has seen grow up beside it? As spent and broken age looks with affectionate interest on the infant developing into boyhood, and ripening to mature manhood, so, may one imagine, the fine old ruin cast pleased glance when foundations of the new Church were laid; saw with growing delight those walls rise in massive strength, and crowning roof laid thereon. Nor did jealous feeling disturb it when it saw its own lofty proportions over-passed by the graceful spire which points to the sky above us. The living soul—faith and Divine grace—which thrilled and wrought in the old shrines enters into the new, and before earth and Heaven this house of the Lord that has been blessed to-day shall pursue the same exalted purpose which was aimed at in those hallowed sanctuaries of the olden time.

Brethren, the memory of the old and the contemplation of the new lead one to reflect on faith—our chief good. Our chief good in most emphatic sense, since no aggregation of all other goods is worthy to be compared to it. Forget not that which was uttered by the great voice from the throne: "Behold the tabernacle of God with men. They shall be His people, and God Himself with them shall be their God." Think, likewise, on the psalmist's word: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord—the people whom He hath chosen for His inheritance (Ps. xxxii.). What high rank is like to this? What riches are precious as this? What joy is comparable to this? This before all let us ambition for our country. That which this holy house has been built to secure unto us—God's grace through prayer and Mass and

Sacraments—let us esteem beyond all besides. Old Ireland is great and glorious and free so long as we are God's people, and He, with us, our God. And if any man should say to you that this world is of greater importance than the world to come, that earth is more to be esteemed than Heaven, that Irishman should prefer bread and butter and raiment for the body beyond the grace of God, that institutions which concern merely our earthly weal are of higher moment than the Christian education which has direct influence on poor children's souls—though he who utters it should have his brow wreathed with shamrocks, and bear a green banner in his hand, set him down as either criminal or fool! Be our thought and maxim that of Augustine, saint and sage: "Quidquid aeternum non est nihil est"—Whatsoever is not eternal is nothing. Remember the Divine Master's query: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" What shall it profit a nation if, having built factories whose machinery shall by and by stop for ever, having housed her people in commodious dwellings that shall by and by crumble, having amassed riches which inexorable time shall thieve away—she, through the lack of Christian education and through the influence of pagan guides, lose faith—lose the vigour of faith—lose the brightness of faith—lose one least degree of spiritual good? Let us hold fast the teaching of our country's greatest patriot. Who was he? He was the man whose name this day's ceremonial imprints on this magnificent Church of Trim—our glorious St Patrick, who broke the galling chain that held her in Satan's bondage. Let us love the old land as he did, and seek, as did he, her sovereign interest. His sovereign interest is this—that her sons know, love, and serve God now, and that they come to enjoy Him for ever hereafter.

CHRISTIAN CHARITY—THE ORPHAN GIRL'S NEED OF IT.

Preached in the Church of St Saviour, Dublin, on Behalf of St Vincent's Girls' Orphanage, North William Street, 4*th June*, 1905.

"Most dearly beloved—Be prudent and watch in prayers. But, before all things, have a constant, mutual charity among yourselves, for charity covereth a multitude of sins."—Words taken from the Lesson of this Sunday after the Ascension.

Had one of you, dearest brethren, at early morning of the first Easter Day stood nigh to a certain gate of Jerusalem, he would have seen a woman running at utmost speed towards the Holy City. Had he remained there for brief space of time after her arrival at the city walls, he would have seen two men—they, likewise, proceeding at utmost speed in the direction whence the woman had come. The woman was St Mary Magdalene; the men were the Apostles, Saints Peter and John. Before the dawn Magdalene had gone forth whither love compelled her steps, to the place where on that solemn Friday afternoon the body of her Lord had been laid. With mingled terror and joy she perceived that the tomb was empty. She fled to seek the two disciples, that she might communicate to them the startling intelligence. Wherefore did she select these two as the men to whom she should break the momentous news? An angel on guard at the sepulchre had named one, Peter; her knowledge of the relations between the Divine Master and His followers guided her in the selection of the other. It had seemed good to the Lord to discriminate between those two and the remaining ten. His mind had chosen Peter as the one on whom He

would confer sovereign authority over His Church; John His Sacred Heart selected as the one on whom He poured out His tenderest love. Thus did they occupy distinctive place in the Apostolic College.

The remembrance of this distinctive place held by those two disciples of the Lord will help us to appreciate a significance which attaches to a certain character of their teaching, when at a later date they stood forth to deliver to mankind the saving truth committed unto them. One point in the revealed programme of Christian morals is emphasised in the writings of both.

One strong thought of the mind of the Master is set forth in the forefront of Peter's teaching: one desire of His Sacred Heart gave colour to the entire apostolate of John. You have heard from the lesson of the day's Mass the words of St Peter. He taught with sense of solemn responsibility; he taught as the Church's Sovereign Head, addressing the faithful on the transcendently grave interests of their eternal destiny; he taught under the guidance of the Divine Spirit; and—mark the item in the moral code he would chiefly put into the brain and conscience of mankind—"Before all things have a constant mutual charity one with another." Had one challenged the Apostle with the query—"Why charity before all things?" we feel he would have made answer: "It is the Master's Word; so has He ordained that we should teach."

The history of St John's Apostolic Mission intimates the same with greater clearness and force. Read his letters. They tell the reason for styling him "The Apostle of Love." Brotherly love is the dominant note of his inspired writings: "Let us love one another"; "We have passed from death to live because we love our brethren"; "This is the declaration you have heard from the beginning—that you should love one another." Thus, many times and variously does he commend the excellence and necessity of fraternal charity. A day came when, alone of the chosen twelve, John remained on earth. By martyr's death each of the eleven had sealed his testimony to the Gospel he had preached, and gone to his eternal rest. John was left amid the toils and miseries of earth's pilgrimage. Years went

—many years. Men that heard and saw the Apostles died; their children came to manhood and died; yet did John live on. The Roman Emperor seized him; bade them fling him into a cauldron of boiling oil. Lo! when the burning liquid was poured off that the seething corpse of the hated servant of Christ might be cast out for the beasts to devour, the saint of God stood up and came forth alive, unhurt! and on he went living to extreme old age. May not one judge, with show of reason, that Heaven's ordinance had ruled a special mission for John? That to him a special message was entrusted—or, rather, that, a call having been given him to preach more than others a certain lesson of the Sacred Gospel, All-ruling Providence had decreed he should abide long amongst mortal men in order that many generations might catch from Apostolic lips the word of the law which God desired mankind chiefly to learn? Did the eleven, seated on their thrones, wearing their crowns, enjoying Heaven's bliss—did they, ever and anon, looking down to earth, fix their gaze on John, still toiling, still suffering? And if they thought and looked upon him, did they turn with questioning surprise to the throne on the Eternal Father's right hand and ask: "Master, when shall John come up to share our bliss? He was dearer to Thee than all the rest; wherefore tarries he so long amid the dark misery of earthly life?" If such a query were spoken perhaps intimation was given by the Sovereign Lord that the chapter in the Holy Code entrusted specifically to John's preaching was that which the Most High would impress beyond all else on the race of man.

Therefore, the interesting and touching fact St Jerome has recorded. St John had grown old, very old. As his years advanced, and the time of his Heavenward flight came nearer, the interest attaching to his personality increased. Throughout the Christian world was his name familiar. Old men dying had told their children that they remembered to have seen in their young days the tragic sight on the summit of a hill outside Jerusalem of One fastened to a cross by nails. They had since learned that the Crucified One was God's Own Son—and the man they saw standing at the foot of His cross, the man to

whom He spoke words of love just before He died, still lived in the city of Ephesus! How men must have yearned to see the favoured one! From Ethiopia, where the Evangelist had lit the lamp of Christian truth; from the nations of the Parthians and Medes; from distant India, whither Thomas has borne the Word of Life; from Spain and Gaul; from the ends of the earth, one may well conjecture—flocked multitudes of believers, drawn by the strong desire to look upon the most wonderful man in all the world. The aged saint no longer went about on his preaching mission. The feet that had borne him swiftly on that Easter morning to the loved Master's tomb were feeble now; they could carry him about no more. If he is to come forth and teach the eager thousands now, he must be borne in strong men's arms. And oh! what emulation in many a breast, all ambitioning the privilege of carrying the hallowed person of the patriarch that the eager multitude might see and, perchance, hear him. By drawing of lot was the privilege determined. The favoured ones take in their arms that which they must have felt belonged rather to Heaven than to lowly earth. Into the open they bear him; the expectant crowd at first glimpse of him feels the thrill of a mighty emotion; every head is bowed in salutation of awe and love for the gentle patriarch—the Seer of Patmos, the Inspired Evangelist, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Strong is the wave of feeling that surges within the breast of the pilgrim and moves all the deeps of his soul as he stands to-day within the Holy City on some spot which the Divine Lord's presence in the days of His mortal life has for ever consecrated. Think on the spirit of that assemblage, the seizure of their souls to the very centre and root with profoundest reverence, the effervescing of their hearts in religious joy at sight of the man on whom were focused the thoughts and love of the entire Church of God. They looked upon his withered hand, and they recalled that it had clasped the Hand which had made the world! They looked upon his feet—some, mayhap, succeeded in imprinting a reverent kiss upon them—and they reflected that those feet had been washed by the very Son of God! They looked upon his eyes,

dimmed now from age, and the startling memory came over many souls of the multitude that those eyes had once been dazzled when on Thabor's summit the effulgence of the Lord's transfigured glory had blazed upon them! They saw the snow-white locks that fell from the old saint's head; and surely their minds went back to the scene of which their fathers had told, when that head, then adorned with locks that were richly brown in the freshness of youth, had rested on the bosom of God Incarnate, and the ears, now doubtless inept to hear, had almost caught sound of the beating of the Sacred Heart of the world's Redeemer! No need to tell that 'twas with mind alert in the most elastic energy of faith, and with their hearts' supreme devotion, they prepared to listen to the gentlest whisper bringing least moiety of sacred teaching from his venerable lips. The hungry and thirsty souls opened wide. Time came for the saint to speak. Straightway was the mass of people hushed. The feeble voice broke the solemn silence, and this the expectant multitude heard from the Lord's holy prophet—"My little children—love one another!" 'Twas lengthened speech enough for the enfeebled energies of the sainted sage; 'twas exhortation pregnant enough for the listening crowd. The preacher was taken back to his calm dwelling; the people dispersed, nearer to eternal life for his brief discourse. When they returned, with undiminished eagerness for the sight of the man of God and the blessing of his inspired teaching, the burden of his speech was the same—"My little children—love one another!" Brethren, shall we not wisely judge that ordering of the Divine Spirit was there—that Heaven, having chosen one to whom the special mission of preaching brotherly love was assigned, ruled he should stay amongst men long years after his colleagues had gone to their reward; that after the entire Apostolic body has disappeared from the earth, "their sound having gone forth into all the earth," the last echoes of their teaching should be the words that enjoined on Christian men to love one another?

Thus, then, have we been taught—the Christian religion has "in the head of the book" charity towards our fellow-mortals. The Gospel does not include charity merely as

an item of its programme; it displays it in the forefront of its legislation.

No guidance from religion do we need to give assurance that the love of the neighbour which alone has Divine recognition is the love which helps him in his need. Elementary activity of man's reason is allied with the Spirit of God in proclaiming that he who sees his brother in need and shuts up his heart against him has not the charity of the Father in him.

Behold, brethren, the ground whereon is based the plea that is spoken to you to-day. The orphan asylum in North William Street solicits aid. I wonder—is the thought which is in some minds a right thought; is the apprehension of some hearts well grounded—that in recent days too human an estimate is formed by many of the relative merits of the various enterprises of benevolence that grace our city? One encounters evidences of an attitude of mind in not a few, according to which a mere orphanage has but second or third rate claim on our charitable resources. Doubtless there is that in institutions of another class which strikes more readily what one may call the pious imagination. The "lost woman," the child in the grasp, or all but in the grasp, of the proselytiser—these have imperious claim on the practical sympathy of the right Christian. But the Christian who to right spirit joins thoughtful mind—mind which thinks under the guidance of Christian principles—knows that the need of the destitute orphan goes far to constitute the need of those for whom the noble Magdalene Asylums and Sacred Heart Home have been established. The demand of human nature for that of which the orphan girl is deprived is, in many an instance, behind the want which so strongly appeals to us in those other classes of affliction. The orphan girl is in need. The young girl whose bread-winner is taken off by death is in need. She hungers—many a time. Hunger is pain. Hunger can be—not rarely is—intense pain. There can be agony of hunger. Say not, brethren—ah! the kind of thing is said, and with the rapid disimprovement of our ideals frequently said—say not—think not—this manner of protest against to-day's

class of begging from you: "Am I to be asked to subscribe towards the keep of those well-clad, well-fed children?" Are they well-fed, well-clad? Good—that shows that their need has been supplied. Well-fed and well-clothed they are to-day, by the aid of what last year's charity sermon brought them. We want them—God wants them—to be well-fed and clothed to-morrow; hence the pleading that is made to-day. For this, moreover, is there pleading—that other children who are in want may have like supply accorded to them.

Recognise, brethren, real charity. Be not as the light-minded, whom airy fancy, not Christian reason, is wont to guide. Airy fancy, in place of Christian reason, directs the thought and emotion of those who, when they behold the grand man of wealth descend from his carriage, enter the grimy hovel, and then reach a loaf to a starving child who seeks to hide her ill-clad state by huddling herself into a corner, break forth into enthusiasm of praise, whilst they have no admiration for the nun who gives the child, not a loaf, but a meal; who feeds, not the naked, but the child comfortably clothed by the same hand that feeds her; who clothes and feeds the child, not in grimy hovel, for that same nun has first taken the child from the grimy hovel and seated her at the cleanly table in the cleanly, bright refectory of the well-kept orphanage.

Take, brethren, this other thought. Fancy a man of ample resource bidding his servants on Sunday morning go forth to the highways and by-ways of the city to gather thence fifty destitute children, and lead them to his house, there to be fed with three meals on that blessed day. Universal praise would hail signal benefaction such as that. What manner and degree of praise would it be if, having done the good deed to-day, he repeated it next Sunday? Let the supposition be that every Sunday in the year he feeds those fifty needy ones. The Christian community, the pagan community, would hold him high in honour; his very name would become the symbol of the glorious spirit of benevolence. After his term of life had come we should look to see, behind the funeral car that bore his remains, those half hundred clients of his in processional

order, their tears falling down to earth, and their prayers mounting to Heaven, testimony of the worth of the Christian hero whom the world had lost. My dear brethren, exalted doer of good like that I have found. Better than him I have found. That imaginary hero of charity—he whose like you never saw—fed but fifty children, and that on but one day of each week. "There hath stood One in the midst of you Whom you knew not"—of whom many think not. There is a lady in your city who, on all days of the year, and on all days throughout each revolving year, feeds two hundred orphan children. She is the superioress of the North William Street Convent. Two hundred young girls! Over their heads, like the outstretched wings of Providence, stands the roof of that blessed home. Full right has the Sister Superior to ask some priest to mount the pulpit and, in the name of the Gospel of Charity, beg the Christian people to give her the wherewith to prosecute her noble beneficence. The children are fed, clothed, educated. Industrial training is given them, the efficient character of which, given the chance of advertising itself in the memorable exhibition in the Convent more than a year since, won fervid encomium from all who had the joy of witnessing it.

Dearly beloved, it is as Christian people mainly I must ask your aid for the institute of charity in William Street. Forget not the grave spiritual arguments that recommend this work to your practical sympathy. Think well on the spiritual perils from which many a child is rescued when she is taken into the harbouring care of those nuns. If one there be here who has not thought on this, to such a one I would tell a tale.—Two young girls lost within brief space father and mother. They stood, poor children, hand in hand on the green sod of the churchyard; and, too young to realise their loss, looked with scarce more than the gaze of curiosity as the corpse of their recently widowed mother was laid to rest. They were taken back to what had been home: 'twas home no more; its light was extinguished, and its fount of supply for their wants dried up. The priest brought them to the orphans' asylum. Alas! the house was already strained to the utmost capacity of its

space and of its funds. Anxious deliberation was made on the great need of the youthful pair, and at length the large-hearted nun in charge resolved on attempting what seemed an impossibility. One of the children—the younger, supposed to be in the greater need—was admitted. Her elder sister, to the sorrow of the nun and sore disappointment of the priest, should have provision sought for her somewhere else. On the doorstep of the orphanage the sisters bade each other "Good-bye." One entered the blessed enclosure; the other went out into the wide world. Employment was found for her ere long; the place was lost before many months. Again a means of living presented itself, and again and again, in fitful periods, till at length she was lost sight of by those who had manifested kindly interest in her welfare. I think of the two guardian angels of those young souls. One bright spirit on that fateful morning went rejoicing, by the side of his fortunate charge, into the safe and peaceful asylum. There he watched her religious training; he shared the joy of her first Communion day; he acted as invisible sponsor at her Confirmation. By day and by night he feasted on the thought of her well-preserved innocence. After the growing girl had been well taught in the orphans' school she gave evidence of a call to the religious state. Her beautiful angel, proud, with the pride permitted to guardian spirits, of the continued triumph of Heaven's grace, stood by her one bright May morning when they placed upon her graceful form the habit of the Good Shepherd. He sang an exulting canticle in the ear of his Lord on the joyful day of her profession, and magnified the doing of merciful Providence for that, in the hour of her need, his cherished child was admitted to the place of safety and sanctification. —Another angel turned away sad from the closed door of the orphanage. As time rolled on dangers displayed themselves in the way of his young charge. Corrupting influences began their work. Spirit of great power though he was, arrayed in the beauty of holiness, that young woman forced him into scenes of sin. She foiled his loving purposes in her regard by entering the way of iniquity. One who loved her, loved the memory of her, though

knowing naught of her place or manner of living, prayed for her with the daily insistence of supernatural love. The sister on the mountain-top, in the bright elevation of her holy religious life, prayed for the sister plunged into the dread warfare on the dark plain below. She asked the Lord to effect that, if they were to meet no more on earth, they should at least meet before His throne above. For her own and her sister's spiritual weal she offered all the years of her anxious and laborious striving for the salvation of the poor victims of Satan, who sought refuge under the banner of the Good Shepherd. It chanced upon an evening that she responded to the call of the bell that was wont to be rung by applicants for admission to the refuge. Having opened the door, she saw before her the embodiment of dense misery. A woman on her knees, giving signs of an almost breaking heart—dishevelled hair, disfigured face, broken sobs, sighs and groaning told of a load that pressed down the unhappy spirit, despite the partial insensibility which indulgence in strong drink had induced. The nun looked down with tender pity on the victim of sin. Fair was that religious—fair with the charm that comes from a stainless heart. Peace was in her look, purity in her breath, and the white robe she wore symbolised the brightness of her inward beauty. In her gentle voice was sweet music's sound as she invited the sinner to follow her into the peaceful enclosure. They entered an oratory placed near the hall of admission. It contained a massive cross whereon the figure of the dying Redeemer hung. Turning to the poor outcast that she might encourage her to throw herself with trust at the feet of the holy cross, the nun looked with more direct gaze than before into the disfigured features, and pain, as if an electric current, shot through her inmost being; she saw the companion of her earliest years, the one who had been fondled by the same mother's arms, the sister she had bidden farewell to on the doorstep of the orphanage twenty years before! Strong are the human spirits which grace and virtue have tempered: the servant of God, mastering her outward senses, whispered to the prodigal—"Let us pray." They knelt at the foot of the cross. It was Cal-

vary reproduced; the world's Redeemer hanging on His Cross; beneath, Mary the Virgin, and Mary the repentant sinner!

Brethren, 'twas beautiful sight, those sisters in the hour of triumphant grace; but sad, and oh! how dishonouring to God, was the previous dark history of one! How far better for her soul, how far better for the interest of the Divine honour, how far better for many whom she had dragged from the bosom of God and plunged into the ruin of sin, could that orphans' home, twenty years before, have received the then innocent child into its safeguarding sanctuary! Let the mind and heart of every Christian argue thence the desirability, the need, be it called, of maintaining such an agency of benevolence as the Sisters of Charity have set up in North William Street in a condition of strong efficiency, so that the holy women who administer it may with bold trust open wide their arms to every needy child who seeks the shelter of its walls; who seeks the food, raiment, education, and Christian formation which they have for years past endeavoured to supply.

Be the wisdom yours, brethren, to heed the voice which speaks to you to-day. It is the voice of God, the orphans' Father and your Sovereign Master. He asks your contribution for maintenance of the house which is His, that His little ones may be helped to persistence in His love during life, His serene peace when they come to die, and blissful possession of Him for ever.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

PREACHED ON THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—1905—IN ST MARY'S, MELMOUNT, STRABANE.

THE disciples had addressed a query to our Divine Lord: "Tell us," said they, "what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the consummation of the world." In His reply, which is the Gospel extract assigned to this Sunday, He combined two subjects. Even the lesser of the two is of serious moment. It is the memorable destruction of Jerusalem.

The destruction of Jerusalem possesses interest for the mere pagan mind, holding, as it does, prominent place among the wonders of human history. It has interest far more acute for all to whom spiritual things are a concern. It presents, for confirmation of our faith, a fulfilment of one of the Divine Master's prophecies. It preaches, moreover, impressive spiritual lesson to all mankind.

Our Lord foretold certain signs which were to precede the doom of the Holy City. In that same 24th chapter of St Matthew He is recorded to have said: "False prophets shall arise and shall seduce many." The prediction was fulfilled. The trustworthy Jewish historian, Josephus, informs us that impostors and magicians appeared on all sides. Promising to do prodigies, they drew multitudes into the desert. Notable among them was one named Theudas, who pledged himself to divide, by preternatural power, the River Jordan. This man the Roman procurator pursued, arrested, and beheaded. An Egyptian soothsayer, by seductive lying, drew as many as thirty thousand people after him. Again, the Lord foretold: "You shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against

kingdom." Among the Hellenist Jews, spread through many regions, seditions were stirred up; likewise at Cesarea, Scythopolis, Ptolemais, and Tyre; at Gadara, in Cyprus, in the stately cities of Damascus and Alexandria. The Roman Empire was ravaged by the civil wars of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, whilst it was attacked from without by the Parthians in Armenia, and by the Sarmatians in Pannonia. Yet more premonitions did the Lord utter: "There shall be earthquakes." How true and how dreadful the fulfilment historians of the period testify. At Smyrna and Malta, at Crete, Chios, and Samos, islands of the Grecian Archipelago, storms arose which inspired fear even to hearts well used to stupendous displays of nature's forces. Such was the force of wind and the weight of rain, so frequent the play of lightning, such the unusual thunderings and rumblings of the quaking earth, that men looked to behold the collapse of the whole world's fabric. Finally, the Divine Master prophesied "terrors from Heaven" and "great signs." A sword-shaped star and a portentous comet were seen in the sky for the space of an entire year. More startling still, chariots were seen to whirl across the sky, and armed bands to march through the clouds. Once, at dead of night, on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, light as of noonday shone for the space of half an hour upon the Temple. A year previously, on the day of Pentecost, the Temple's massive gate of bronze, which twenty men were needed to move, flew open of itself, and from the inmost recesses of the holy place were heard voices which cried: "Let us go hence; let us go hence."

Such were some of the premonitions which ushered in the doom of the chosen city. Portentous they were, and well might be, for they were the forerunners of a calamity most portentous indeed. Recall, brethren, the words wherewith the Blessed Redeemer announced it: "There shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world till now; neither shall be." That characterisation of it Divine lips uttered before the fact. After its accomplishment Josephus wrote of it: "If all the troubles witnessed since the world's foundation were compared to it, they are all far surpassed."

Destruction came upon Jerusalem from within and from without. Whilst the Emperor Vespasian and Titus, his son, were arranging affairs of government in the East, factions sprang up in the city. Seditious spirits formed themselves into diverse parties, and introduced the curse of civil war. Fierce combats were waged; warring confusion spread through the town; terror seized on all the peacefully disposed, since civil strife confined to the inhabitants of a single city means ceaseless combat, from the nearness to each other of the contending factions. Day and night was the din of battle heard. Ere long there was added to the fierceness of deadly strife impiety unheard before. Armed bands burst into the very courts of the Temple. To the religious sense of the average Jew this brought shock that moved the depths of the soul. The Temple, uplifting its massive walls and towers, stood up before their minds' gaze as the hallowed home of prayer and religious sacrifice and holy peace. On that sacred pile crowning the summit of Mount Moriah, the religious thoughts, feelings, and hopes of every Israelite the wide world over were focused. At the very time we are concerned with, a multitude from far and near was within the city for the august festival of the Pasch. Mingled shame and sorrow came upon them as they heard for the first time sounds of warlike fury break upon the solemn atmosphere of the holy place. Ere long they saw the sacred precincts stained with blood. Not the blood of contending parties merely. Innocent worshippers coming with sacrificial offerings were struck down, and in such numbers that, in the words of the faithful historian: "Lakes of blood filled the holy courts." Thoughtful ones must have then understood the mysterious cry of the blessed spirits: "Let us go hence." Religion seemed to have fled, and the abomination of desolation to stand in the holy place.

Then did famine uplift its dark shadow over the city. "There shall be famines," the Master had predicted. The great festival had occasioned vast increase of the city's population. Scarcity of food began to be felt. Blind fury in the factious spirits aggravated the evil condition of things. Blind fury, in truth, it was; since self-interest, the

animal instinct of self-preservation, whereby man is wont, even in wild excitement, to be influenced, seemed extinguished, and madness to have seized upon the people. Corn and other provisions had been laid up in stores for the people's sustenance. To these stores riotous men set fire! Awful misery ensued. Thenceforth the cries of war-like anger were mingled with the piteous wailing of the hunger-stricken. Men staggered along the streets; then fell faint, and strove to crawl to someone from whom the smallest pittance of food was hoped. As the famine increased and spread, the cries of the combatants prevailed over the gradually weakening moans of starving wretches; whilst the growing misery tempered not in the least the wild spirits of factious men. Still they fought with deadly rage. Over the prostrate forms of creatures fainting in the streets they contended. Fury raging in their hearts and flashing in their eyes, rushing to strike adversaries, they trampled on the prostrate forms of friend and foe. Worse to tell, with all their infuriated hate of one another, in one thing the parties to the strife agreed: both slew the peaceful and unoffending. Having slain, they tore the dead bodies as dogs are wont to do with their prey! Verily, mania—murderous and suicidal mania—had come upon the doomed people.

During these horrid scenes the Roman eagles, symbol of all-conquering power, approached. The Roman Prince, noble-hearted Titus, though leading an invincible host, desired peaceful mastery of the city. He deputed the illustrious Josephus, who had been captured by the Romans in a previous war, and who now accompanied their troops, to go round the walls outside the city, and plead with his compatriots in favour of wise submission. Vain was Josephus' pleading; vain the forbearance of the Roman General; Jerusalem's hour of doom had come, and fatuous blindness was upon the people to enhance its tragic character.

For a brief space fear of the external enemy made the citizens desist from domestic conflict. Against the army of Titus they fought with an indifference to death which begat the energy of desperation. The folly of their resis-

tance soon became glaring madness when domestic strife was renewed. Those who inclined to peaceful surrender to the besiegers were put to death on the plea that they were about to desert to the enemy; those who were known to have provisions were cruelly slain. With increasing hunger increased the frenzy which made the evils of that awful time grow with compound interest, the misery of the ill-fated city feeding on itself as one woeful day succeeded another. The strongly armed attacked the defenceless who were possessed of food, and snatched it from them. Rushing into houses with fierce cries, they tore thence what provisions they found. If they found none they charged the inhabitants with concealment of them, and then inflicted tortures which decency forbids one to describe. Maddening hunger—to what length did it drive the wretched people! The unground corn they ate ravenously; the half-baked bread was eagerly snatched from the fire and consumed. "Famine was too hard for all other passions," truly wrote the historian of the day. The hunger-stricken child snatched the food from the mouth of the parent; the like did parents by their children! Those who lay in the streets in the agonising pangs of starvation, and to whom food and drink were sometimes offered, had it wrested from them. Nay, as though to distinguish the fall of Jerusalem from all horrors that ever had been—that "great tribulation such as had not been from the beginning of the world"—men awaited not the hour of need to drive them to dire rapacity. It is told of that people—truly God-forsaken, in the sense that they had forsaken God—that they wrought wanton wickedness, as though to keep their madness in exercise! Men who felt not the pangs of hunger seized famishing children, not by bodily limb or hair of head, but by the scraps of food their teeth clenched, and, lifting them by that means high in air, endeavoured by shaking the wretched creatures to make them loose their hold on the miserable pittance! With advancing time famine extended its area. Whole families and houses perished. Dwellings were filled with men and women perishing of hunger; dead bodies filled the lanes; in the

market-place adults and children wandered about like shadows of themselves, and, as each was seized by the fatal famine disease, he fell dead. Riotous horror was now no more. Hushed were the cries of warring factions. Even the lamentations of those in affliction ceased. There came upon the city a deep silence—a "deadly night," the historian calls it. Most of the dwellings resembled congested tombs whose dead tenants were tossed about in gruesome disorder. The dead lay thick through the streets, in eternal silence. Beside them, mingled with them, lay the dying. Prowling robbers went about in grim silence seeking pillage. When they came upon the dying, and saw that the wretched ones looked with fear at their terrible forms and gleaming swords, dreading death, they pierced them through in pitiless savagery. When they saw the uplifted gaze of hope, of eager longing for speedy deliverance from pain, they let the wretched ones be, to die of slowly torturing hunger! At length, even the blood-thirsty marauders came to feel the famine pangs. They stumbled along the public ways; they reeled as men reel when drunk. They sought food, and when food they found not, they would fain turn all things to food. The girdles that encircled them, the shoes in which their feet were clad, the leather from their shields, they endeavoured to devour! "Tribulation such as had not been from the beginning of the world!"

Ah! brethren, know you the thing that was witnessed in that tribulation of Jerusalem? There was a woman—her very name has been handed down to us—she was of high rank and ample wealth. Her dwelling had been beyond the Jordan; but when the false prophets had seduced many, she fled to Jerusalem, and, unhappily for her, was in the city when the siege commenced. In the time of want rapacious men rushed to her house particularly. Daily they took her substance, leaving her at length with naught to supply her own need. Hunger came upon her; the famine fever seized her. Maddened by excessive torture, she took the child that vainly sought nourishment at her breast, and cried, "Oh, miserable infant, for whom shall I preserve thee in this war, famine, and

sedition? Come, be thou my food!" Her infant she slew, and, having slain, she ate!

Dire famine is wont to generate pestilence. "Pestilences and famines" the word of the Lord had predicted. And pestilence failed not to come. Empoisoned breath went through all the place. They that were sick lacked the power to bury the dead. Those still in sound health, seeing the multitude of corpses on all sides, the same growing ever larger, fearing the labour of the work, and apprehending at every moment their own turn, let the dead lie. 'Twas scene of universal horror. The few that remained of men in authority took putrefying bodies from the piles that lay in the streets, and, bringing them to the city's lofty walls, flung them over into the valley beneath. The Roman General rode round the beleaguered city. He perceived the encircling valley rapidly filling with corpses in an advanced state of putrefaction.

The noble-hearted Titus groaned aloud. Uplifting his hands to Heaven, he called God to witness that the tragedy was not his doing. Many times he had besought the insensate Jews to save themselves and their city by yielding. Hearing the tale of the woman who had slain and eaten her own child, he said in his heart that the city wherein such a horror had been done should be left no longer for the sun to shine upon. He gave the word; his formidable legions flung themselves on the shattered walls, rushed into the city, fired and destroyed it. The Temple Titus would have saved, but Higher Power than his had ruled its destruction. A soldier flung a blazing torch upon it, and in the same month, and on the same day on which Nabuchodonosor, the Babylonian king, had burnt its predecessor, Solomon's glorious pile, the second Temple, and the last, was laid in ashes. Ninety-seven thousand Jews were made captive by the conquerors; six hundred thousand bodies had been flung over the walls; one million one hundred thousand had been slain; Jerusalem was made desolate; her enemies from within and from without had beaten her flat to the ground; she disappeared, and the curtain fell on one of the supreme tragedies of the world's history.

Wherefore, brethren, that tragic ruin? 'Tis told in the Holy Book. Twoscore years previously the Son of God, dwelling amongst men, had gazed on the city with tears, and announced that woe was to come upon her because she "knew not the time of her visitation; knew not the things that were to her peace;" which meant that she had rejected Him; had rejected the call of God.

Wondrous, incredible, if not recorded in inspired history, was the bounty of the Most High towards that nation. No less wondrous the story of Israel's ingratitude. Of a truth, two parallel lines we trace in their history—one marked by God's marvellous goodness, the other by the people's hardness of heart. Think on the promise to Abraham. Magnificent blessings were decreed for them, and an angel from Heaven was sent down by the Almighty to announce them to the chosen patriarch. Think on their deliverance from Egypt, the mighty hand of the Most High multiplying prodigies on their behalf. Yet the echoes of their song of praise chanted on the Red Sea shore had scarce died away ere rebellious murmurings against God's vicegerent were heard amongst them. In the memorable journey through the desert God's eye was ever fixed in loving providence upon them, and His hand outstretched to guard and bless. He drew water from the rock to refresh them; He rained food from the sky to sustain them; by pillar of cloud in the day-time and by pillar of fire at night He guided them; victory over fierce and strong enemies He frequently vouchsafed them. But, think on it, brethren; and, of a truth, it is by moral effort one succeeds in accepting the story: even while their leader held converse with the Most High on the mountain-top, while the vouchers of Divine power and authority were booming in the thunder and gleaming in the lightning's flash, that truly extraordinary people were flouting the Almighty by the worship of an idol at the mountain's base! Their impious ingratitude exhausted not the goodness of God. He brought them into the land of promise. Established there in peace and plenty, they violated the conditions whereon He had bestowed it on them, intermarrying with the old tribes and rendering worship to

idols. He sent inspired prophets to teach them in His name. The prophets Jerusalem stoned! At last the Heavenly King sent His Own Son! God came Himself; God made man. "The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared." The Jews saw Him in their midst. Of the Jews, and primarily to the Jews, He came. He preached to them the Word of Life. He invited them to a promised land of never-ending life and honour and wealth and bliss. He shed blessings on them daily, sweet smile of His beaming on them, and His Divine Power at their service to heal every disease and turn their sorrows into joy. And lo! marvel of perversity! Heaven's sun shone upon a deed which by its evil perversity bewilders the mind; a Jewish multitude thronged the space before the palace of the Roman Governor; the Governor brought forth from the place of imprisonment the Son of God, bound as a criminal, bleeding from the wounds of many stripes, thorn-crowned, reduced to the extreme of weakness. He showed Him to the thronging people, all debtors to His gracious bounty, and the thronging people, with clamorous shout that went up to listening Heaven, cried: "Away with Him! Crucify Him!" Jerusalem rejected God; rejected His loving yoke, His elevating grace, His saving truth, His proffered salvation. Her people had, in the Holy City's midst, made twofold prayer. They shouted aloud: "Away with Him! Crucify Him!" and it was done; He was crucified. They shouted aloud: "His blood be upon us and upon our children!" and on their children woeful doom descended.

That dark tale, brethren, contains a lesson which we shall be wise to study. Parallel between ourselves and the Jews in the display of God's bounty we may easily detect. Parallel in irreverent obstinacy is possible. If irreverent obstinacy towards the gracious call of God and disregard of His grace be ours; if we fail to know the time of our visitation; ignore the things that are to our peace; then should we fear lest there be witnessed some day parallel between us and Jerusalem in the manifestation of Divine wrath. For, behold, we too are a chosen people; God's love has been revealed towards us; a call from His love has been given unto us, and glorious promises uttered

with Divine guarantee of fulfilment—promises compared with which that made to Abraham was meagre and poor—wellnigh nothing. God has made us for Heaven. He has invited us to Heaven. How much does that mean? We know not, yet we do know, for we know that we know not; we know that Heaven is beyond what we know; beyond what it is possible for us to know; a great good transcending all thought, all fancy. It is life for ever; perfect health for ever; peace for ever; riches for ever; high rank for ever; fullness of delight for ever. No man earth ever knew had his heart filled; the heart full would seem to be complete happiness. The condition of existence we call Heaven will be the filling of the human heart. More than that—immeasurably more—to render man's heart capable of receiving the abounding and the exalted bliss of Heaven, God must pour into the heart a mysterious thing from Himself called grace; He must, by supernatural grace, uplift man far beyond his natural condition and powers. So that we may set it before our fancy in this form: eternal life, whereunto the Creator has called us, will be the filling our hearts to the brim with delight, then enlarging them a millionfold, filling them again thus enlarged, and maintaining them replenished with noblest delight from the infinite fountain of His own perfections for ever and ever.

Unto this destiny is every child of Adam called. Scarce would one think it if left to divine man's destiny from the attitude of the average man of our day. Look out upon the human world. Observe the ordinary activities of men, listen to their speech, note their choice of books to read, study the character of their amusements. Who would think, from the bearing of the great mass of humanity, that every man, woman, and child in the world was created in order to know, love and serve God here on earth, and to enjoy Him eternally in Heaven? Consider even this Christian land, this exceptionally Christian land, as all deem it. Men in Ireland who are numerous beyond counting, whose names are tabulated on baptismal register as members of the true Church, live as though they had neither been made by God or for God; endowed with

powers of body and mind, having allotted to them precious time, precious hours, days, and months, and years, they give time and energy and interest to this world's business, to the bodily enjoyments of eating, drinking, and sleeping; to the entertainment of inane reading, and to that sinister occupation which with each revolving day amasses an ever-thickening cloud between man's conscience and every lofty ideal—gambling. You in this assemblage whose Christianity is thorough, recognise in sacred sorrow and alarm the melancholy truth—more true to-day than it was yesterday, and threatening to be yet more true to-morrow.

Have these men discovered that the revelation of the Most High has been found to be false? Has God grown old? Has He shed portion of His power and authority? Have His charms faded? Has the music been hushed and the lights extinguished in the happy kingdom above? Has Hell's torturing fire gone out? Has this world ceased to be a fleeting show? Have the high thoughts of saints, their yearnings, their rapturous love, their brave achievements for God been the dreams and fooleries of idiots? That king of long ago who cried—"O, God, besides Thee, what have I desired upon the earth? . . . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever! The law of Thy mouth is good for me, above thousands of gold and silver—" was he misled by the spirit of error? He whom Tarsus of Cilicia gave to the world, the famed Apostle of the nations—was that folly which he thought and felt and wrote, that he counted all things as vile filth that he might gain Christ? Have they whose interest, time, and energies are monopolised by the business and amusements of earth discovered what no man in all the centuries that have gone could discover, a satisfying reply to the challenge of Jesus Christ: "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul"?

Dearest brethren, let all who decline to comport themselves as servants of the Almighty Master; all who, while using the manifold gifts of His bounty, feeding on the daily bread He gives, and being blessed by the rain He distils and the gladsome sunlight He beams upon them,

despise His institutions of grace, and are deaf to His call—let them think on the fate of Jerusalem. There are as big thunderbolts in the armoury of Heaven as ever were cast. Did someone here experience sense of terrorising pain as we thought on the tragic doom of the Holy City? One hour of hell fire transcends it all! And hell fire is the doom that awaits all adult mankind that fails to attain to Heaven. And to none is a crown in Heaven awarded save to him who has lawfully striven in the employment of the Lord's graces and the pursuit of eternal life.

THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

Advent Conferences at St Saviour's Church, Dublin, A.D. 1908.

First Conference: Self Denial.

The lesson assigned to this First Sunday of Advent is taken from the thirteenth chapter of St Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and reads thus: "Brethren—knowing the time, that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed and the day is at hand: let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and strife; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." A strange exhortation! Had the Apostle counselled them: "Have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; fear and love Him; keep His commandments," it were easy to understand; but "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" calls for reflection if we would know its meaning.

When one puts on a garment they who look at him see the garment; they see the man, but see him robed in the garment. May we dare think that the Apostle counselled the faithful to something which should effect that men looking on them should, in some sense, see the Holy Lord Himself? It is even so. We may think largely, dearest brethren, when we would interpret St Paul's mind as to the significance of the Christian vocation. An exalted religion, in his estimation, is the religion to which gracious Providence has called us.

What is the thing, or the combination of things, needed

in order that a man's life reflect the Lord Jesus Christ? To find reply to this query let us note that the Apostle sets the "putting on the Lord Jesus" in contrast with certain soul-destroying vices—rioting and drunkenness and other grave disorders. We are, therefore, justified in thinking that it was no mere good of supererogation, but something necessary for the soul's life—a bounden condition of salvation—he meant, when he bade them to put on the Lord Jesus. Someone may ask: Is it not sufficient for salvation that we have true faith and observe the law? So it undoubtedly is; this twofold condition is all that the catechism sets forth as requisite for eternal life. Yet is there needed something not formally expressed in that brief enumeration of conditions? Not a definite additional requirement, else the catechism's teachings were misleading, but something which, though not expressed in the formula—"Have faith and keep the Commandments"—is yet necessary if this twofold condition is to be fulfilled. Thus, the thing of which there is question may be regarded as cause of right faith and obedience to the law, and, conversely, effect of the same. There is a good which must be in man in order that he persist in healthful faith and fidelity to God's commands, and that very good will be in man if he do but persist in healthful faith and observance of the Commandments. There is a spirit—a "tone"—which is produced by goodness of life; and this very spirit, or tone, tends to produce and perpetuate goodness of life. Let us name a man's visible programme of virtuous living the body of his goodness; we may then name this spirit of which we search the meaning the soul thereof. That spirit, proceeding from the teaching of the Lord Jesus, depending on the aid of His grace, cultivated under the stimulus of His example, leads to a supernatural bearing, which constitutes resemblance, after our lowly fashion, to the Divine Model Himself. That spirit, and the supernatural bearing which results from it, make the "Christian character," to which your pious thought is invited during these Advent Sundays.

If we would learn wherein this spirit, this Christian character, consists, we may not seek guidance from our

own hearts according to their natural attitude; nor may we consult friends whom we judge good merely because they do not scandalise us; not even the theory we might construct from the study of some men whose conduct wins our esteem, much less ideals maintained in what is called Society, should direct our judgment. In truth, there prevails widespread lack of right conception regarding this momentous thing. "Legion" is the name of those who, content with knowledge of the technical requirements of Christianity, ignore the spirit, and, ignoring, fail to cultivate it. Hence the melancholy phenomenon of the man who is Catholic, but not Christian; not Christian in the full sense of the term. His name is on the baptismal register; he has received the illumination of faith; he has learned more or less of the language of Christianity; is acquainted with portions of the ceremonial of Christianity; knows something of the history and forms and surface meaning of his religion; but a certain principle of life which is the root and heart of moral Christianity is wanting to him. The Church has to tolerate within her bosom a multitude whose normal religious thought and feeling represent a religion which preceded Christianity, and which has long since been set aside as insufficient. Before the coming of the Son of God there was a religion for men—a true religion—a religion with Heaven's sanction behind it. There was then communication of spiritual truth to men; there was a moral law; there was a living interest of souls to save; there was an ideal set before the better minds, stimulating to spiritual effort. There was a "character"—call it the Jewish character if you will—a character proportioned to the lights and aids of the religious economy of the time. But the law of that olden time was the law of nature; the law which the moral sense implanted in us by nature teaches and impresses. Even the Decalogue, promulgated amid booming thunders and flashing lightning on Mount Sinai, if we except the ceremonial element contained in the third precept, was but a formal emphasising to the mind and conscience of the people of the law which nature's voice had proclaimed from the beginning of the world.

Now, although God has set aside the Jewish religion as an organised system, the moral law it contained is still in force. The Old Dispensation as marking the measure of God's requirements has been swept away; yet the Old Dispensation lives still; it has been absorbed in the New. From this there arises in many children of the New Dispensation harmful misconception. Since Christianity has not merely not abolished, but in her Gospel teaching expressly enforces, the natural law, there is for many a blurring of the lines which separate Christian from natural virtue. Not used to serious pondering of religious truth—not used to walk in the higher light; on the other hand, yielding frequent obedience to the depressing tendencies of nature, and living in a low spiritual atmosphere—many men easily reach an attitude of thought and feeling, and assume a bearing which would have suited the old religious standard, but has not the elevated tone of the new. Thus is there for the Church the sad consciousness of holding within her embrace men of tepid, sluggish, worldly sort, who practically lose sight of the heavenly lights of the New Dispensation; the moral principles which ordinarily influence them being merely natural, and their ideals confined within the bounds of pagan decorum. Yet because the stately building with pointed roof to which they betake themselves on Sunday has a Christian appearance and Christian title, because approaching it they behold the distinctive sign of Christianity set high on its soaring pinnacle, and, entering within its portal, behold the Christian saints flaming in brilliant colours from the windows, and hear the language that tells of the Christian revelation, they delude themselves into a sense of having all the good that is demanded, and are in undesirable peace.

This lack of perception of the Christian character is shown in the mistaken favourable criticism which is common amongst us. How meagre a goodness is required to win the warm commendation of men calling themselves Christians! Is there one who is truthful in speech? That good thing in him is praised. It is worthy of praise; but we must bear in mind that pagan law demanded truthfulness of speech. Is there one who, ever truthful in speech,

is, moreover, just in commercial dealings? The combination was seen among pagans. Let the truthful and honest man be, in addition, one of peaceful demeanour. The union of the three wins high encomium. Yet were there pagans truthful, honest, and peaceful. Find a man who is all this, and moral besides—moral in the strict sense often attached to the term—free from unchaste stain. Here we have a picture of goodness that would elicit warm commendation from the average member of the Church; habitual abstention from lying, stealing, and cheating; from quarrels with his fellows, and from unclean conduct. Such a one, when found, is held in high honour. But, brethren, such a man has not gone beyond a pagan programme. Let truth, justice, amiability, and moral rectitude have their attraction enhanced by the charm of a prayerful life. Yet, though it startle, be the truth told—not even all this excellence is proof of the Christian spirit. 'Tis true that in actual fact this praiseworthy combination is not likely to be met with save where Christian inspiration and grace move the man to the perfect fulfilment of the natural law; but the theoretic truth is that all those admirable features named, being within the compass of pagan law and pagan ideals, and having been actually seen, though probably rarely all combined, in pagan times, cannot be said to present a picture of Christian goodness.

What, then, in God's name, is the Christian requirements? What is the Christian character? No need to tell the school in which it is taught; the Master from Whom it must be learned. Christianity is from the Son of God; from Him its being, its form and name.

Sit, brethren, in fancy, among the multitude who heard Him preach the memorable Sermon on the Mount. You will hear Him there set forth this elementary notion of the character of His moral system; its transcendence of all standards previously proposed for human guidance. Express mention did He make of the code propounded to the chosen people, and He declared in striking form the superiority of the spirit and the law He came to introduce. "You have heard that it was said to them of old"—so He spoke, and then cited some precept of the old covenant, or

common interpretation thereof. "But I say to you"—He went on, and then spoke the law that was to rule on the same subject matter in the covenant He was inaugurating. His very form of teaching, prescinding from the thing He spoke, conveyed with strength and clearness that Christian virtue, compared with that which had been looked for in preceding ages, was to be on high level. "You have heard that it was said to them of old—'Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy,' but I say to you—love your enemies!" Other points of conduct did He similarly touch on. But it is to the *form* of His preaching then and there, brethren, I now invite attention. Hear Him intimate distinction, so marked as almost to seem opposition, between what was said to them of old, and His lofty teaching. Hear inspired echo of the same in the message delivered to the Galatians by the Lord's Great Apostle: "We also, when we were children, were serving under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent His Son . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons!" Later in the same epistle St Paul reminded them that "Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, which hath affinity to that Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But that Jerusalem which is above is free—which is our Mother!" From Sinai the old law, with its restricted and inferior spirit, came to the bond-children of the day; from the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ, and from His hallowed lips, have come to us the nobler ideal, the higher service, and the richer blessings of this "fullness of time."

Descend, brethren, from that Mount of the Beatitudes where He prepared us for it, and hear the great secret from the Divine Master's lips on the plain of Cæsarea Philippi. See Him surrounded by an eager multitude. His disciples were there, awaiting His word in reverent love. His enemies, animated by envious hate, were there, to hear Him with malevolent intent. A third class, doubtless, was represented there—men of good heart, solicitous for their spiritual welfare—already, perhaps, stirred by a suspicion that this Great Preacher was from God—was God's Messenger to them—that they were bound to give heed to His

teachings; bound, in order to their eternal safety, to enrol themselves among His disciples. Let us join ourselves to them as they stand to catch what was to be for them the word of destiny from the lips of Jesus Christ. The evangelist records that our Divine Lord, calling the multitude together with His disciples, said to them: "If any man will come after Me"—well may one judge that at such introductory words conscientious listeners must have felt tenfold increase of earnest attention, since it seemed they were about to hear the very thing for which they yearned, the prime condition of His service. What their sharpened hearing sense caught from His lips was this: "If any man will come after Me—let him deny himself!" Behold, brethren, the great secret the Son of God brought with Him! Speaking that oracular word, He uplifted the banner beneath which all His followers must march; He sounded the key-note of the melody of praise which the lives of good men must chant before Him; He made known the root of the life and growth He would look for in the vineyard of each individual soul. On that memorable day He revealed the foundation of *the Christian Character*.

'Twas a new way for a leader to invite men to follow Him. Nor has it been imitated in the ages that have since gone by. Founders of religious systems, canvassing the adherence of disciples, have all, save One, sought to draw them with "cords of Adam." They have announced their programme in attractive form. Wonderful when first uttered must have sounded these words—"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself!" Were there among His hearers proud men? Were there men of soft ways of life—sensual men, wont to render obedience to the baser appetites of the human breast? Did these, when the unwelcome message fell on their ears, exhibit on their countenances protesting indignation or sad despondence? Did they say in their hearts: "This is no teaching suitable to us; *this saying is hard*; *who can hear it?*" Did they, in sullen revolution, turn from Him, and go down to their houses with the resolve to have no part with such rigorous Teacher of Virtue? If such was their thought and feeling and action none from among the twelve was sent to call

them back in order that the "hard saying" might be explained away, and the conditions for enlistment in the army of the Lord set forth in milder form. Explanation was needed of many mysterious things the Divine Master uttered; but clear to every intelligence He made His speech when He proclaimed that which it was of supreme importance all men should know—the character that was to mark His followers unto the end of time.

Wonder not, brethren, that it should have been ordered so. The religion that would save mankind was bound to prescribe, among its radical elements, the denial of self. To feel this one has but to consider the place which self holds in man. Man's moral activity may be likened to a huge machine. The wheels of that machine are the various impulses which stir the human breast. But the mighty wheel that sets all in motion, which moves all the pistons, turns the minor wheels, initiates and maintains the throbbing life of the whole—is love! Man thinks, plans, and toils because of an impetus that comes from love. And what, be it asked, is the object of man's love? Understand the query of the natural man. What does man, according to his natural inclinations, love? My dear brethren, we need no doctor of any of the sciences to speak the assured reply; let the heart within each one tell it. You will, perhaps, say to me: man loves a variety of objects. It is true. He loves some from the mass of his fellow-mortals; he loves attractive things in material nature; he loves the enjoyments which the ingenuity of artful civilisation has provided for him; he loves that to which the appetite of the senses tends. But these various inclinings of the human heart are subordinate streams of feeling—all under the dominance of a master passion of love which gives to all their being, force and direction; a love deeper than all, stronger than all, more ancient than all—it is the love of self! Self—dearest thing to man, because nearest thing to man. Nor does he love aught on earth, beneath the earth, or above the earth; aught in the beautiful vastness of the vegetable kingdom; among the exquisite creations of art, or the charms of human loveliness; aught that walks on the level plain, flits through

the sunlit air, moves on the mountain slopes, glitters on broad ocean's bosom, or blazes forth in the resplendent sky—nothing from all these departments of creation does man love save because he first loves self. His complacent smile for all; his affectionate feeling towards all; his benefactions to all—they are the surface symptoms of the active fire that burns at the root of his being—the supreme love of self.

Assembled in the House of God, our concern is—what relation has this love of self to the interests of the immortal soul? In the first place—love of self embodies the entire melancholy philosophy of sin! Wherefore does mankind sin? Many answers can be given, all true. But the diverse causes of sin are themselves effects of the original cause—love of self. Let the Holy Book say—avarice is the root of all evil. What is avarice? The love of self. Think of all the passions; note their tragic influence on souls, and confess that, be the number, magnitude, and variety of the evils they bring on mankind what they may, all their destructive fruitfulness is but the result of the grinding power of the main wheel in the human machine—the love of self. 'Tis true, despite the paradox—the act which involves oneself in eternal ruin is done at the bidding of self. And those lighter prevarications whereby God is so frequently offended by those who would call themselves His friends—whence come they? Uncharitable gossip—whence is it? Self craves the gratification of speaking the uncharitable word; and there is the immoral unwillingness to say no to its appeal. The outbursts of ill-temper—wherefore are they, and how comes the frequency of them that gravely disedifies in many lives? It is from the evil thing from which is all evil—love of self. To restrain the tongue, to repress feeling, calls for moral striving, and that striving is disagreeable to self. Estrangements and disputes—what leads to them? There is collision of one self with another self. Self feels that it has not been considered according to its due; has been crossed or slighted; from the wounded sense you can trace the course of evil from the first reproaching whisper to coldness and morose separation, and thence onward to

shockingly unchristian hate. Know you, brethren, the name of the despoiler of matrimonial peace? Self-love is his name. If there be not, in certain emergencies, the Christian diplomacy which prompts to wise repression of self on one side or both, self-love, deeper and stronger than the gushing love of lovers, will lead to the first small cloud that dims the sunshine that used to be, and, mayhap, in the sad course of time, to thunderstorms which wreak misery, for parent and child, in this world and in the next. Observe the operation of that evil love of self in the encountering of danger of sin. "Fair to the eye, and delightful to behold" was the apple to the appreciation of Eve, as she gazed upon it dangling from the tree. That gaze was danger; she was held in that danger by the fascination that came from the enjoyment which self found in gazing on that which was "fair to the eye." A daughter of Eve in the twentieth century is caught by something fair to the eye, or fair to the heart, tickling to the fancy, pleasing to the senses—perilous reading or amusement; and underneath the agreeable experience of sense or heart or fancy is the ever-revolving wheel at the centre of the machine—love of self; self craving for the pleasing thing that is prejudicial to the soul.

From the same fecund source comes all negative sin, the omission of bounden good. You remember, brethren, that item of sad interest the catechism taught us—that the Fall produced in us a disinclination to good. Hence spiritual good is done only by effort, and effort is unwelcome to the sluggish nature we have inherited. Take man so far as he fails to deny self—that is, so far as he yields to sluggish nature. How does he pray? Does he pray? What an unrelished occupation, what a wearisome occupation, is prayer and pious reading to him who, through tolerance of the evil, self, has merely nature within him, and the fashion of the world without him, for inspiration and guide! Set up before your mind's eye, brethren, though it is painful sight—apt to elicit sigh and tear—set up before you the picture of the man who bears with what may be called the material and superficial programme of Catholic life, but fears, and, fearing, shirks, those

things which are the heart and soul of it—and this through the demand from sluggish self that he would refrain from the Christian endeavour which is distasteful.

Oh, how unattractive God can become to the man who permits fallen nature to regulate his tastes and his ways! What a disrelish for reading about God and speaking to God can come to some Catholics of the male sex! How fearful some of them are of being brought near to Him! There's the man whose wife, kneeling beside him at Mass, has her heart bounding with love for the great Lord, her inner faculties singing alleluias to the Creator Who made her and to the kind Providence who has given her every good she enjoys; there is he—a block of stone for the coldness of his heart; a lump of clay for the inertia of his spirit; a shrunken, withered plant for the lack of vivid faith—the coldness, hardness, and dryness being the result of his yielding to self, when self begged that he would not inconvenience it by arousing it to the robust activity of well-said prayer.

See the mischief wrought by this enemy of men's souls in another department. Do you know the man, brethren, who would bare his bosom to a thousand possibilities of tragic death on the bloody field of war; who would face the African lion in his native plain—so high his courage; but who shrinks with abject terror at the thought of walking to the Church, kneeling before the holy tribunal, searching his conscience and making his confession? Men whom he meets every day as his friends grasp this nettle once or twice or four times a month, and are not hurt. This miserable man has permitted two things: he has permitted the erection and dressing-up of a scarecrow, and he has permitted the turning himself into an irrational animal in order that the scarecrow may exercise its terrorism over him. This at the instigation of self. A dead weight is the spirit of man since the Fall, and the law of spiritual gravitation which the Fall introduced entails toilsome effort for him who would uplift that weight, and self pleads that this toilsome effort be not exacted.

Not all does self-love hold back from pious activity. I mean not all in whom it successfully operates. Early

training, individual temperament, the way of one's friends, or certain external circumstances effect in some that a moderate degree of pious activity is not distasteful. For such there can be the framework, or body, of a good life without cost. But self, not having invited them to the grievous sluggishness we have just considered of shirking spiritual activity, forms the plot to spoil the good they undertake. Satan who entered Paradise to tempt our first parents to sin is the same Satan of whom the Book of Job tells that when the sons of God stood one day before the Lord he stood among them. The self which makes the husband unfit, because of his lack of Christian activity, to be husband or father, is the same which, seeing the wife engaged in religious practices that, in their material performance, so to speak, involve no sacrifice, aims at impeding her due solicitude for the spirit thereof. Thus, while laying hold of one and keeping him outside the sanctuary where spiritual activity is exercised, self accompanies another within the sacred portal, and when within spoils the pious actions which are meant to give honour to the Most High and bring grace to a soul. This is the evil thing that comes to those who, in the face of the Gospel declaration, would fain serve God and yet live without self-denial. To serve God and not deny self is impossible. Were there grades of impossibility one would say that it is more impossible to insert indulgence of self into the very acts which are supposed to belong to one's service of God, and yet have them acceptable before Him. Yet, so urgent is self-love in its mission of ruining mankind, and so unwise can people be when not on guard against it, that that particularly impossible feat is sought to be accomplished. One of those who attempt it is the woman who would bargain with God—"I shall serve Thee, but with the understanding that my tastes, my likes and dislikes, are to be considered. I shall go the way to Heaven, but I observe that it is a narrow way. These cherished inclinations of my self so expand me that I should find it difficult to walk that road; therefore, have it made broad for my convenience! I shall wash in this pool of Bethsaida that is within the Church, but let some-

body see to it that there shall be comfortable cushions all round the place, and that the attendants do their part nicely: I shall go to the cleansing Sacrament, but let the minister thereof have a care that when he pours the Precious Blood upon me he shall not hurt nor incommode!" This victim of the deluding arts of self-love would have peace without paying the price of peace.

For all this, brethren, and a world of mischief to souls wrought by this powerful and insidious agency of spiritual evil, do the wise ones hold that, within the borders of the interests of souls, self is God's greatest enemy. Therefore was there antecedent necessity that the religion which was destined to save mankind should set "in the head of the book"—should inscribe in large letters over the portal of its Temple of Grace: "If thou wilt enter here thou shalt deny thyself!"

Shall we hesitate to accept this condition of grace and peace which the Divine Master has ordained? Ah, dearest brethren, be it remembered that there is more than the the Lord's ordinance to impress this Christian character on our hearts. He did not say merely, "Thou shalt deny thyself"; He said, "If any man *will come after Me*, let him deny himself." Look upon Him in the first moment at which it became possible for men to see Him: you see an infant, poor, lowly, and amid hard surroundings. Look upon Him in the last hour of His mortal life: you see Him dying, tortured and degraded on the Cross! Let self-love, then, play its hideous pranks in the exterior darkness of paganism; within the Christian Church, illumined by His grace and stimulated by His example, "let this mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus." Let us follow, even though far behind, in His hallowed footsteps.

If the wise resolve and wise policy be ours of walking the royal road of His Cross, we shall find ourselves in noble company. All they of whose eternal happiness the Church has given formal guarantee—by that royal road they went. "Lifted up from the earth," the Holy Redeemer drew all things to Himself. Lifted up from the earth of solicitude for self; lifted up to the serene atmosphere wherein self-

interest is not permitted to rule, He drew to Himself the multitude of the saints. Place yourselves, brethren, in fancy on the floor of the largest library the world contains. Let it be that the many thousands of volumes which load its extensive shelves are of one category—histories of the saints. Be it supposed, moreover, that of the vast collection you have not read even one, nor been told its contents. Yet, if I inquire: know you aught of those histories?—you can reply: yes; the chief thing in them all I know with assured knowledge. Whether the holy one of whom that volume contains the record was of the misty ages of the long, long past, or of the group whose fame of sanctity the Church's Supreme Head proclaimed but yesterday; whether he spoke a tongue unfamiliar to me or used the same speech that I have learned; whether he held high ecclesiastical position or served the Lord in the humble way of common life—this I know to have been in the man, for it was bound to be in all the canonised heroes of the Church—the spirit of self-denial was in his heart; the influence of self-denial operated in his daily conduct; and all the fair picture of holiness that shone in his life, to the edification of his fellow-men and the honour of the Most High, took its being and its beauty from his "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ" by the spirit of self-denial.

Those men and women, brethren, according to the Christian's hope, are to be our everlasting companions! Shall we, then, fashion ourselves of soft material? Shall we pursue the agreeable course of life to which nature allures? Shall we dexterously guard ourselves, even when engaged in the formal service of the Most High, against all that is discomforting? Shall we dispense ourselves from the trouble of serving Him, or—next dear thing to fallen nature—render our service of Him as little inconvenient as ingenious cowardice can make it? And—having acted that part of contradiction to the Sacred Gospel—shall we look for it that, when we die, angels who are masters of the ceremonial in that other world will bear us upward through the shining spaces to the pearl gates of the Kingdom, and send us into the beautiful place, to walk its

sunlit glades, and scent its ethereal perfumes, and hear its rapturous melodies, and enjoy its God in union with the Christian saints? Did this queer thing happen, might not Paul of Tarsus rise from his throne—Bernard of Clairvaux rise from his throne—the "poor man of Assisi" rise from his throne—Catherine of Siena and Francis Xavier and all the rest of them stand forth in amaze, as though some deordination of the Divine plan were being wrought which lowered the temperature, dimmed the brilliance, and soiled the beauty of the blissful place? That is a way, brethren, of saying that the spirit of the saints and of their Master must be ours.

On this day of grace, when the Apostle's trumpet blast is sounded into our ears, let us feel that "it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep"; let us "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"; let us, in the spirit of all who are Christians indeed, seize on the disorderly inclinations of fallen nature; cast them beneath our feet; bravely trample the evil things, that on the dishonoured ruins of self we may proclaim the victory of Heaven's grace.

THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

Second Conference: Humility.

WERE I addressing an assembly unused to employ the elevating means of grace—in whom, consequently, the downward tendencies of nature were strong—I should commence this afternoon by asking you to bear with me while I invite your thought to a feature of the Christian character which is one of the least welcome to the natural spirit in man—the virtue of *Humility*. That dislike to the subject on the part of the natural spirit only renders stronger and clearer the desirability of our meditation on it.

That humility forms part of the Christian character is notorious truth. Indeed, either it is one thing with self-denial, or, self-denial being set down as genus, we may regard humility as the chief species subordinate thereunto.

At the outset let us form a correct notion of its meaning. We may describe it as the virtue which keeps man's heart free from the desire of honouring himself; free from desire of honour from others; which is, therefore, content with the absence of honour; which, as it becomes intensified, bears with resignation disregard, slights, humiliation. This disposition of the heart proceeds from a conviction in the intellect that man has no claim to honour—that honour is due to God alone. Mark, brethren, that when it is said that humility is averse from desiring honour for oneself, there is meant honour for oneself apart from God. For there is an interest of the Almighty connected with man. His glory is, in certain ways, associated with us. 'Twas from God the command came: Honour thy father and thy mother. Parents are the Lord's representatives. So are His anointed ministers; and honour rendered to the creature in order to the glory of the Creator is in perfect

accord with the law, nor is desire of it violation of humility. Understanding it thus, let us make reflection on the revelation of the mind of God concerning humility.

St Matthew narrates that on a certain day a group of the Lord's followers engaged in a discussion, the settlement of which they referred to the Divine Master. They approached Him with the query: "Who, thinkest Thou, is greater in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Our Lord perceived apt occasion for momentous lesson, and in dramatic form He proceeded to impart it. The group of men around Him saw, doubtless with curious interest, that He called a little child, and set him in the midst of the disciples. Did they, I wonder, guess His purpose? Did they, seeing the Lord of Heaven and earth, the Maker and Judge of all men, holding the tiny child by the hand, suspect that the Divine wisdom saw in the little creature symbol of a saving philosophy to be imposed on all Adam's race? Not long were they left to speculate as to His purpose. With His sacred hand on the child's head He spoke the oracular teaching: "Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!" (St Matthew xviii. 3).

Explanation of the meaning of the words "Become as little children" no one needs. Not the physical proportions of the child, nor the ignorance of the child, did He have in mind; the interpreting faculty common to us all feels assuredly that He meant that which to the moralist characterises the child, its freedom from the uplifting of the mind and heart by pride. For every man whom each passing hour brings nearer to the rendering of account before the Eternal Judge, I know no sentence in the Bible more suggestive of holy fear than that. For it is the Judge Himself telling us beforehand that without humility we shall not be saved! Nor is the reason for holy fear diminished if we consider certain circumstances of the relation in which we stand to this gospel virtue; circumstances which enhance the difficulty of its attainment.

All moral endeavour which is meritorious in the Lord's sight involves difficulty. But to him who would tread the path of Christian humility there stand forth impedi-

ments of a sort peculiar to this matter, and of particularly serious character.

The first difficulty is sufficiently expressed if one say that the practice of humility is the bitterest, rudest, most objectionable form in which self-denial can be exercised. The self which urges to pride is the very inner part of self. In combating other vices we intrude on the friends, the properties, the surroundings of self. The painful experiences brought to a man by evil fortune or by the malice of enemies belong to things which are not his real self. Man's splendid apparel, which they bespatter or tear, is not himself; the arm whose amputation by the surgeon's knife brings pain, is not self; the apple of the eye, precious though it be, and of exquisite sensibility, is not self, much less so are wife and child; but that which the Lord calls on man to surrender when He prescribes humility as a condition of salvation is self in the very extreme of reality. Wherefore, he who successfully combats pride lays searing iron on the very marrow of the sensitiveness of the human personality. Recall him who judged that the man who stole his purse stole trash, but thought and felt far otherwise when the thing it was thought to steal was his honour. The good woman of the house when fire bursts forth thinks comparatively little of the ruin of splendid furniture and costly robes, but her imperilled child she catches to her bosom, and in face of blinding smoke and raging flames expends all her energies in saving him. So with this self-love of ours. It clings with fondest preference to that which it is called on to surrender when humility has to be acquired. The humble man has, therefore, lifted the heaviest burden the law imposes; he has overcome the most dreaded enemy of his eternal interests.

Another difficulty stands in the way of him who would please the Lord in this matter. For virtuous living in all its departments there must be wise use, and abstention from unwise use, of some human faculties, and this at the command of man's will. According to the variety of virtues and variety of temptation, is there variety of faculty set in action or held in restraint. Now, man's power over all his faculties is not the same. Over some

he has despotic power; over some merely political power. Some he commands as dictator, and they must obey. Others he can but induce: he can reason with them and seek by presenting certain considerations to lead them to act according to his will. The former is despotic power; the latter political. The distinction is well illustrated if we think of one who sets about prayer. There are certain acts to be done at behest of the will. First act—to kneel: the will gives command, and the bodily limbs obey; he kneels. Second act—to join hands: the will gives command, and the hands obey; they are joined. Next act—to bow the head, or close the eyes, or upturn them to Heaven—the ways of individuals differ; but in all these the will, issuing its order, is, as matter of course, obeyed by the powers in question, over which man has despotic authority. Next act—to raise the mind and heart to God. Does he issue command to this effect? How is this command received? As the former? Ah! brethren, well you know the significant difference. Man's mind and heart are as truly his as the members of his body; but great is the change in the reception given to his orders when he moves from one to the other of these departments. Now, compare the average heart of man in the combat it has to wage for the attainment of humility with the same in its combat for acquirement of other virtues. Hear the Almighty's voice as He makes trial of His creature's fidelity: "Thou shalt do no unjust thing to thy neighbour. Thou shalt be temperate in the use of food and drink. When on the Sacred Day of Rest the Great Oblation is offered in My temple thou shalt be there." Those precepts communicated to him, the Christian in whom there is average fear of the Lord and solicitude for his soul feels that trusting in grace he can say: Well, I shall do none of those things on which the ban of the Most High has been set. I shall hold back my hand from the deed of injustice; I shall close the lips when tempted to speak that which is counter to charity; I shall transfer my body from my home to the Church on the sabbath morning, and be there when the Holy Sacrifice is offered." But see the Christian of the common sort when the same Sovereign Lord announces

the law of humility: "Thou shalt subdue the motions of pride; thou shalt have the spirit of a little child." There cannot be the easy trust that was when other class of demand was set before him; man feels that the burden here offered him is far more weighty, and far less his strength of soul to bear it. Here is no question of the bodily members receiving the law that they do not the forbidden deed; here man's wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against spirits of wickedness in high places, powers of evil high enthroned in his inmost heart.

A third difficulty has the Christian to encounter in his endeavour to grace his soul with the adornment of humility. Of formidable destructive power is the enemy against whom one's innocence has to be protected. Oh, that he would come as comes the raging lion of the jungle! that he would portend his approach with thundering roar; advance with open jaws and flaming eyes, and leave the chance for forewarned prey to fly, or hide, or discharge deadly missive against the dreadful foe! This evil thing, pride, is wont to attack in soft and silent fashion. Not mailed hand deals rude blow, but soft velvet gives touch of ingenious blandishment. Temptation and sin are done almost without one's knowing. Subtle are the movements of the heart; confused mingling of motives oft takes place in one's interior, such that, in many an instance, a deed being done, we fail to render ourselves assured account of the reason why we did it. A region of mystery is our heart, and when passion evolves clouds, as passion is wont to do, we scarce know which spring has been touched for the production of the given act; which motive, good or evil, has operated in us. Our fellow-men see the outward act, and praise the good man who has done it; our own eyes are witnesses of the act, and the partiality of self-love flatters us on the estimable deed; whilst the Eye that searches the reins and the heart sees, perhaps, but dead sea fruit: the seeming good spoiled by the unworthy motive inspired by deceitful pride; the voice being the voice of Jacob, but the hand the hand of Esau. Largely for this fatal insidiousness of the attacks of pride, one may well think, shall come that rude awakening for victims of the

evil thing foreshadowed by the Divine Lord when He told of the many who will vaunt before Him on the doomsday the good things they shall have done, but to whom He will return the confounding reply—"I never knew you!"

One more consideration is there which renders difficult the cultivation of this bounden virtue of humility. Humility stands in interesting contrast with many other virtues, for that it receives no patronage from the world. Doubtless, God's commanding will and the aid of His grace should be sufficient that we should avoid evil and accomplish prescribed good; but obedience to the law is often facilitated when to our good disposition there is added, somewhat like an extrinsic conscience, the public opinion of Society. Our weakness pressed by the tempter is more likely to reflect on the wrong character of the act which the tempter suggests, when it is felt that the multitude round about condemns it. Here humility is at a disadvantage. The world seems as though it stood before the Upper Chamber in Jerusalem on the day when the disciples of the Lord came forth with pentecostal benediction upon them, and the list of virtues in their hearts and hands to be announced to mankind. The world reviewed the list; resolved on approval of some, since, after all, God has to be recognised, and attitude of outward moral decorum is expected. Therefore does Society unite its voice with that of the gospel cry: Down with the robber—the brawler—the murderer—the liar—and the unclean! It has built its jails, and erected its gibbets for stern attestation of its loathing for these categories of evil. But, humility issuing forth from the Upper Chamber was greeted by no approving smile from the world; it was straightway recognised as in emphatic opposition to sentiments, and yearnings, and attitudes cherished by fallen man. The Church of God has too masterful a place on earth to permit professed opposition from the world to that which the Divine Master taught; but the world looks askance at humility; withholds all sign of goodwill, and leaves it out in the cold as the Cinderella of the virtues. Hence this sad thing to the Christian observer of the world's life—in those whom the world educates there is no shame of pride! Worse thing:

the man who has permitted the world to shape his thoughts and feelings, and be his guiding and governing rule of life, does not await charge of pride from his fellow-man; he openly acknowledges his guilt; not as acknowledging guilt, but with bearing and tone of boast will he proclaim his sin of pride! Verily, brethren, God's ways are not man's ways.

Perhaps it is from this unbecoming patronage of pride by the world, from this, at least, as permitting cause, there has come the love of display which in our day has driven the world to indecent folly. Strength and beauty of the interior are less esteemed; solid good is less esteemed; persons and things are less esteemed; and the trappings they wear are attended to; substance is at a discount, and shadow has become men's substance. Is there good on earth to-day? There is not, unless parade of it is made. And it is the parade we call good, not the good itself! Was the speech of to-day an eloquent speech?—I cannot tell. Was the meeting a success?—I cannot tell. Was the funeral impressive? Was the marriage of festal splendour?—I cannot tell. But you were present at them all?—Yes. But I must wait the issue of to-morrow's paper in order that I may tell whether good or grandeur or success is to be asserted of those things! Not the substance, but the shadow; not the good performed, but the parade thereof wins our esteem. And, dearest brethren, methinks Adam has surely fallen, and poisoned stream been transmitted from him to us, seeing that the spirit that is opposed to humility, emboldened by the great world's patronage, would almost whisper to us to put the unholy besmearment of it on the very work of God! Oh, for an hour of St Paul! Oh, that Heaven would lend him to us, and bid him stand in high place at centre of the earth, and in tones divinely reinforced for all the world to hear, proclaim the Gospel which the Master taught him!

I have set before you, brethren, those difficulties which beset the way to the acquirement of the great gospel virtue, partly because they suggest the earnest effort that is needed for its attainment, partly because knowledge of them, and remembrance of them, is guide on the way of them that

would seek it. It is now time for thought of encouraging stimulus to him who would undertake the arduous task of overcoming those grave obstacles.

Ponder, brethren, St Peter's words in the fifth chapter of his epistle—"To the humble God giveth grace." Taking as guide to our judgment all we have read of saints and doctors, all we have caught up from various sources as to the art and science of furthering souls, we must set it down as beyond question that humility is the straight way to the heart of God. It seems to bring the smile to His countenance, and it certainly brings down plenteous benediction from His bountiful hand. Is it that the Most High, looking into the hearts of men and seeing that some are empty of self, judges that in those hearts emptied of the unlovely thing there is room for His blessings, and then showers them down in abundance? There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He stood on Jordan's banks, honoured chief of a band of followers whom his preaching had gathered round him. Men looked upon him with profound reverence as a favoured one of Heaven. Another came forth to gather followers. His preaching would draw men from John to Himself. John, hearing that He was coming, said: "The latchet of His shoe I am not worthy to loose! He must increase; I must decrease!" And behold the Son of God went down into the stream, bowed His sacred head before the humble one, and received baptism at his hands! Another there was with whose name in the infancy of the Church the entire world rang. When men, seeing in him effective missioner of the Christian faith, would lavish praise upon him, the sentiment he uttered of himself was—"I am not worthy to be called an Apostle; I have persecuted the Church of Christ." To that man did God say: "Thou art a vessel of election unto Me!" And Heaven's predilection made of him the grandest herald of Divine truth the world has ever seen. Hear the lowly fisherman's fervid outburst—"Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." That lowly fisherman the Lord uplifted to the clouds; dignity so great did He confer upon him that after two thousand years' gaze upon it the very children of the Church fail to realise it. He is

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the rock whereon God's right hand built His Church; in his hallowed hand are the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven!

We know, dearest brethren, one who is more august illustration than Peter, or Paul, or John the Baptist, of the rule of God's bounty. She has sung the way of the Lord in dealing with humility, and round the world each day that passes in the Church's choral service is that canticle of the lowly Virgin recited. Sparingly has the Holy Spirit dealt out her words. Let us treasure well the few that have been given: "He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their hearts; He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble." So she thought when the Holy Ghost bade her pour forth that rhapsody. Her own brief but portentous history illustrates the truth she spoke.—In the centre of universal creation she stands—highest, fairest of all that Power Divine has made. The giant mountain of sacred majesty which God has built in her person—on what foundation does it rest? Her own lips have told: "He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid." Think, brethren, of her humility, fruitful in blessing to her own soul, and fruitful in the plentiful redemption mankind has received through her. Somebody's fancy, exercising itself on revealed truth in association with blended fact and legend of natural history, has found parallel between a simple thing in the material world and the unspeakable favour which the Holy Virgin's humility brought upon her. They say of the pearl-fish that when the sun is about to pour his rays in rich splendour on the expanse of water the fish rises from the lowly deep towards the surface. Arrived thereat, it catches a bright ray from Heaven's luminary, then sinks back into the profound deep, having conceived, from the heavenly ray, the precious pearl. Down in the deep of lowly thought and lowly sense dwelt the fair maid of Nazareth. One day there shot from Heaven a beam of wondrous brilliance; it came down on the wings of a shining archangel to the Eastern village. Up from the depths of her humility at the Lord's summons came the blessed Virgin. When God's ambassador delivered his message she caught the sunbeam, then sank back into the abyss of her lowliness,

bearing within her womb the precious pearl of Eternal God made Man! Yes, brethren, it is true, and all sacred history has emphasised the truth—to the humble God gives His grace and His signal favours.

I have to remember that the key-note of this Advent meditation on which we have launched is the Apostle's counsel: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ!" Say it, brethren, to your conscience once again. His spirit, in some measure, must be in us, and His ways, in some sense, our ways, if the Christian character is to be realised in us. Every effort at humble thought and feeling is an advance in His footsteps. Every attitude of humility to which we compel ourselves is reflection of His Sacred Heart; it is a *putting on* of the dear Lord Jesus.

Advent invites to Bethlehem. Glance, brethren, at that scene, amazing to Christian thought. Catch that voice of strange tone and unearthly sweetness that comes from without and from above the lowly cave. It is a chorus of angels, and they sing, as their King has bade them, the purpose of His coming—"Peace on earth to men of good-will." Peace! Worthy theme of angels' song, and worthy purpose of the Lord's coming. Beautiful thing is peace when felt in material nature. The peaceful bosom of placid lake, with richness of summer sunshine shed thereon, and round about the drowsy woods seeming as if placed there to keep the secret of tranquil beauty within the enchanted place! But—peace in the human heart! Men's lips have spoken and printing machines often typed the words "Heaven on earth." If the thing for which those words stand be a reality, that thing is peace of heart. This peace does not come from the largeness of one's banking acount; it is not found in the richness of a man's apparel, nor in the beauty of a woman's face. Robust health does not confer it, nor brain stored with many sciences, nor does the beaming smile of friends, nor most carefully selected pleasing environment. The Parisian salon says—It is not in me. The London drawing-room—It is not in me. The marble halls of imperial palace proclaim—We hold it not. Life of wealth and ease and doing one's sweet will—not even this bestows it. Peace

on earth to men of goodwill—that only true peace—was brought by the lowly babe in the stable. "My peace I give unto you"—He said to His faithful ones, and it is the humble soul that attracts to itself this heavenly blessing of peace—the peace "which the world cannot give." Ah! brethren, better thing still—the peace which the world cannot take away. That scene of the peaceful lake winter's rude storms can destroy. Who can destroy the peace of the humble soul? They tried it long, long years ago. Cæsar tried it. Eighty thousand Romans thronged the waving galleries of Flavian's mighty amphitheatre, Imperial Cæsar in the midst of them. That pagan host looking down into the arena saw an aged priest and a frail young maid kneeling in prayer. Like the voice of many storms joined in mammoth chorus came the roar of angry hate from the Roman multitude, poured on the heads of the weak, defenceless Christians below. But through that pitiless storm of human hate, and the torturing onslaught of monster wild beasts, those doomed ones possessed peace of soul.

The secret of the strong conflict bravely endured by the martyrs was God's grace, of course—but God's grace given only to the humble-hearted. The place of the Christian whom pride dominated was not the arena where Christian heroes won immortal glory, but Cæsar's palace, where the apostate reaped the reward of his base betrayal. The same blessed thing, humility, will be the guarantee of God's peace to us.

Let us watch and strive towards humble thought of self, and the bearing to which humble thought of self leads. It is when mind and heart are humble we can rightly speak to God. And it is on them who speak to Him with humble spirit He sends down distillation of heavenly blessings, which are Gilead's balm for every wound of tribulation, and sustaining power in every spiritual conflict. For the humble the Lord's peace in life; after this life—for the humble—thrones that crumble not nor totter, and crowns that never fade.

THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

Third Conference: *Simplicity.*

"UNLESS you . . . became as little children you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Math. xviii.).

If on last Sunday there were any who drew living water from the fountain of grace which is in that text, let them bring their pitchers again, and from the same source draw further blessings. For that Word of the Divine Master, teaching humility, teaches with equal clearness and force the virtue of simplicity. Simplicity is the virtue of the simple. Who are the simple?

The word is used in a threefold sense. We hear it said —that man cannot understand you; he is too simple. There it means wanting intelligence. Again, people speak of "gentle and simple." There "gentle" stands for those of high social grade; "simple" for those of lowly rank. With neither of those senses of the term are we now concerned. We have to think of a simplicity which is a moral virtue, a notable element in *the Christian Character.*

We shall be helped to correct apprehension of its meaning if we look to the source whence the word came. "Simple" is in the Latin *simplex*; the Latin word has given us the English. *Simplex* itself is made from two Latin words—*sine plica*—"without fold." Take an object lesson as to its signification. See the sacristan engaged in preparing the Church for some great solemnity, or the coming of some high ecclesiastical dignitary. It is desired to lay a carpet along the passage from the great entrance door to the Communion rail. One end is placed at one end of the nave, and when the man has proceeded, as is the wont, directly and in uninterrupted

course, to the other end, laying the strip, the carpet is said to be single, or simple; it is *without fold*. Let thought be transferred to the sphere of morals. There is something in man which is exercised in doing good and ill, and which, according to the Divine will, should, when it operates, go forward in straight line. Come back with me now, brethren, to the laying of the carpet strip. Should he who arranges it, having gone some paces, laying it in forward line, stay his step, then walk backwards, continuing to lay the carpet, it ceases to be single—simple—and becomes *double*. Simple is in the original Latin *simplex*; double in the Latin is *duplex*. From *simplex*, simplicity; from *duplex*, duplicity. We now advance in our notion of the virtue whose name is Simplicity. That which in morals should go forward in straight line is, first, the intention of the action, or series of actions, undertaken. When the intention goes directly to the end, and the acts prompted by the intention are under the continual influence of that intention, there is simplicity. If deflection, bending, or doubling back of the intention or of one's acts in relation to the intention, be made, then is there duplicity. We shall advance still further in clearness of conception as to the meaning of the virtue, and at the same time see justification of its assigned origin, by recalling a special significance which has been recently attached in ordinary speech to a word familiar to all. Do they not now speak of an honest man as "straight"? The *straightness* of purpose and action which I have mentioned is simplicity.

It is not easy to name a virtue the practice of which extends over so wide a field of human activity. Nor is it easy to name a virtue which so rarely enters into the conscious solicitude of men for their spiritual welfare. In this it is like the air. The air encompasses us at all times. Eating and drinking, we use the air; speaking, singing, laughing, weeping, asleep and awake, at work and at play —all through life—and when we cease to use the air we cease to live. Yet on the air we seldom bestow thought. Simplicity runs through the very inward texture of all goodness of a good life; it contributes largely to the beauty of a beautiful soul; it is winsome adornment of every

admirable personality, virtues and talents receiving enhancement of their charm when simplicity accompanies them. Analogy with the air approaches nearer to completeness; for, simplicity lost, we die to the thoroughness of Christian virtue; to the life graced by the Christian character.

Let us seek to cherish greater esteem for this truly estimable virtue by a review of some amongst the common ways in which it is violated.

The most deformed, to human appreciation, of sins against simplicity is hypocrisy. The preacher who would convince his hearers that hypocrisy is an evil thing has easy task set before him. It is hateful to God and man. Nor is it among the saints of the earth we have to seek for condemnation of it; to the mass of mankind it is a thing abhorred and contemned. When they encounter the hypocrite in the actuality of life, men frown at the ugly thing which he personates. When in the story-book he is exposed and covered with confusion, matured age nods pleased approval, and youth sends forth a cry of delight. Contemned, did I say, by men? My dear brethren, may not one think that over the hypocrite there hangs that cloud which must shed most painful darkness on the human spirit—contempt of his very self? Before God he stands besmeared with double sin—falsehood and low pride. What a figure he cuts in the Gospel! Who made Jesus, gentle Saviour, lay aside His gentle mien? When did the tender Heart seem as if swept by storm of anger? When did He, of Whom the prophet foretold that the bruised reed He would not break, nor the smoking flax extinguish—when did He give forth, with strength of tone and fiery flashing of the eye, words of piercing denunciation? It was when the Divine simplicity encountered the hypocritical Pharisee. Walking up and down the land amongst ordinary faults of men, His speech was—"Fear not," "Have confidence," "Peace I give unto you," "Come to Me all you that are burdened"—and other language of gracious sweetness. To the hypocrite belongs the distinction of having drawn from His sacred lips the scathing epithet—"Ye brood of vipers!"

This hateful thing is now, and ever shall be, amongst the children of Adam. Its source is that pregnant source of evil—disordered love of self. Self-love stretches forth many tentacles. It stirs up in the breast a war of fears, hopes, ambitions, and envious hate, and then, since the state of war gives rise to the play of diplomacy, there begins in man the diplomacy that is hypocrisy. Let us fear it. And since every living man may do the evil that any man has ever done, let us take precaution against it. Let us be solicitous to make clean the inside of the cup and the platter; let us endeavour to be fairer in God's sight than we are to the judgment of our fellow-men.

Second place in enumeration of the violations of simplicity we give to what we know as affectation. What that name stands for there is no need to tell. By studying an example of it we shall see how the consideration of it comes under the head of simplicity. Picture an affected person. Suppose yourself in conversation with her on some subject that has awakened interest. If the lady with whom you speak were simple, her mind's thought and the intent of her will as governing her conversation would travel straight towards the natural purpose of the conversation. That purpose would direct her queries and answers, her comments, her exclamations, and all that make the matter and form of such intercourse. But it is an affected person we have chosen. Therefore, instead of proceeding along the straight way traced by the subject-matter and the rules which guide right-minded persons in similar circumstances, her thought and solicitude double back or are deflected in various directions. For in addition to the aim which is proper to the occasion, she, in the entangled attitude, or entanglement of attitudes, to which affectation leads, desires that while you take in her views of the matter you speak of, you should also be impressed with a sense of—perhaps it is—the greatness of her talents, the refined character of her training, the multitude of her accomplishments, the wealth of her family, the nobility of her relations, and so forth. The arts employed in order to so impress—unnatural pose, unnatural accent, ingenious allusion and the rest—constitute affectation. The affected

one is, in St Paul's language, "less wise." She stains her soul; she produces disesteem in listener of common sense and Christian ideas; and, if the unwise conduct be habitual, she spoils her personality.

Akin to affectation is all manner of unjustifiable pretence. Pretence comes from the same disorder that has been described, the twisting or doubling back of the aim of speech or bearing so that one shall be thought other than what one really is, or taken as doing other than what one really does. This "acting" is in many instances the consequence of what one may call a sentimental disorder—vapidity of character—light-headedness, which permits the affected one to do what well-made mortals are incapable of doing. It is, however, not rarely carried on with the more serious purpose of bringing harm to some person or cause. I have attached to the name pretence the qualification—unjustifiable. For there can be a pretence which is free from fault and consistent with simplicity. We are not bound to wear on the sleeve the motives of all our actions. Nor are we bound always to seek our ends by direct means. There is a diplomacy which is lawful—sometimes necessary. It is demanded at one time in the transaction of business with our equals; at another time as a help to the securing justice from those placed over us; at another as condition of right administration of those who are subject to us. Nor may it be said—then there are circumstances in which one is not bound by the law of simplicity. No! Simplicity must ever be; and there is ever simplicity when one aims at lawful end; uses right, though, perhaps, indirect means of attaining the end, and in the using of them is influenced by no sinister purpose.

The evil leaven in fallen man which is opposed to simplicity, and sets malicious snares for one's fellow-men, is not infrequently guilty of deceiving oneself. Here is one form of self-deception from which simplicity would protect a man. Think of one who has for long time been habituated to grave sin, and that largely because of a certain dangerous occasion. Suppose him touched by grace, producing holy fear and remorse, and leading him to seek forgiveness in the Sacrament of mercy. Ere many

days have passed after his confession, still saying to himself the resolve which was a condition of God's pardon—"I shall do grave sin no more"—he conceives the thought of resuming a certain occupation, amusement, reading, or companionship which he knows was occasion of offending God. With no evil intention does he propose to return to the occupation or entertainment in question; so, at least, he tells himself. He says within his breast—that region in which the self-deceiver tells his lies—I shall pay this visit; go to this place of amusement; but I shall not commit sin; oh no! on that I am determined; I did my soul considerable harm before; ran the risk of losing it; I promised when receiving the Divine forgiveness that I would sin no more; my mind is made up on that; therefore, when I find myself again in the circumstances which led to previous falls, I shall be on my guard, and maintain the needed restraint. That man, brethren, is one of the self-deceivers, and he deceives himself through lack of simplicity. Were he equipped with this great and good thing—great because exceedingly good—simplicity, he would, gazing with the straight eye of sincere sorrow at mortal sin, see, through the detestable sin, the detestable danger beyond it. Beyond it, observe. In the doing of wrong, the dangerous occasion comes first, then the sinful deed. But in the sorrowing for wrong, and resolving on amendment of life, the sin comes first, and the dangerous occasion comes next, as an evil to be shunned. The eye of the heart in which sorrow is sincere ever sees through the detested sin to the detestable danger of the sin. Wherefore the reason why a man retains, or resumes, practical leaning to the dangerous occasion is because he retains, or resumes affection to the sin; and the reason why one seems to himself to have regret for the sin while arranging to go back to the evil occasion is because he has not the virtue—which may God's bounty grant to all of us, brethren!—the virtue of Christian simplicity.

Self-deception—how many are the people and the enterprises in which the observant Christian sees it! Think, brethren, on another of the self-deceivers. He is member of a public board charged with the administration of

some public trust. There is a vacant post subject to the authority of that board, and a day comes round when a vote is to be taken for the filling of the vacancy. What is the explanation of the act of the man who, in possession of his reason, votes for the unsuitable candidate in preference to the suitable—the unworthy in preference to the worthy? Explanation of it is often found in want of the virtue of simplicity. One man, blessed with simplicity, makes straight glance of the mind's eye; shooting forth that straight glance he asks himself: For what purpose have we come hither? To elect the right man to the post—is the reply which the honest heart of the man whose aim is straight gives to the question. Another man, devoid of simplicity, looks forward, but only a certain distance. Having looked forward to a certain distance, with but loose notion in his mind that the object of the assembling is the choice of a worthy candidate, his thought and his heart are turned aside from the straight course wherein God's law would have them travel, and he says within his disordered heart: "A is the man for whom I ought to vote; but B is the man who is married to my cousin, or was born in the same town with me; therefore, though I know him to be unfit, for B shall my vote be cast." Some people forget that there is a Valley of Jehosaphat!

There is yet another form of sin against simplicity whereby self-love works harm to souls. It exhibits itself in controversy. The aim of controversy should be the coming at truth. When the honest man—the straight, simple man—enters into discussion, truth is the goal he desires to reach, and since his will's dominating influence goes in the straight line to truth, it is the desire for truth that directs his arguments, his replies, his entire speech. Perhaps there are those listening to me who have met the other man. Some amongst you may have had the unpleasant and disedifying experience of holding discussion with him. Once the debate has warmed somewhat he makes statements which you know he knows to be false, and denies statements of yours which you know he knows to be true. As the discussion goes on it becomes disedify-

ingly plain that he is prepared to deny all truths which are against his side of the controversy, and to assert any falsehood provided it favour his contention. What is wrong with this wretched man? This—either he has no regard for truth, or he has unwise regard for something else which prevails over his regard for truth. That something else, what is it? 'Twas spoken here last Sunday week. It is self—God's greatest enemy in man. St Augustine had such a one in mind when he wrote in one of his letters to Pascentius: "It is good for a man willingly to let truth triumph over him, because it is bad for a man that truth should triumph over him against his will. Triumph over him it must, whether he will or not!"

Simplicity, which imparts the surface charm that attracts in him whom the Christian spirit masters, is found also nigh to the root of Christianity, the root of all spiritual good—faith. This strong praise may be uttered of simplicity: it is the basis whereon the spirit of faith rests. Diseased humanity was to be healed by the Divine Physician through the medium of a painful operation. The acceptance of the Gospel yoke was a condition of its realising the redemption wrought on its behalf. If the yoke be heavy to fallen humanity it is largely because of the demand made on man's pride by the submission which belongs to faith. With this thought did the Apostle write to the Corinthians—"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty unto the pulling down of fortifications, destroying counsels, and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of faith" (2 Cor. x. 4, 5). Therefore, for reception of faith and for its preservation, simplicity is the great requirement. The simplicity of faith goes far to reproduce in mature man that resemblance to little children on which the Divine Master has insisted. It was ever so. When the Lord Himself preached the faith, His preaching was unto the fall of one and the resurrection of another; one man heard, believed, adhered to Him in life, died for His love, and reigns with Him in the Kingdom. Another heard the same word; witnessed the same miracles; but he

frowned, cavilled, hated the Preacher, and was there on the Black Friday to swell the chorus of the Deicide verdict—"Away with Him! Crucify Him!" One was simple, and with straight gaze of the mind—*sine plica*—saw and embraced the truth; the other lacked blessed and blessing simplicity.

Ancient history has delivered to us an incident which illustrates this dependence of faith on simplicity of heart, and the signal good this beautiful virtue works in the soul. There lived in Southern Italy at the commencement of the fourth century a bishop named Januarius—he whose blood miraculously liquefies even to this day. He was seized, charged with being a Christian bishop, and ordered to be cast into a burning furnace. After a space the Governor commanded the opening of the furnace that the bones and ashes of the condemned Christian might be swept away. The condemned one was found—whole, alive, unhurt! Not a hair of the head was singed; not a fibre of his garments injured! The Governor, influenced with anger, bade his menials set the servant of God on the rack. On the rack they placed him, and that dread ordeal which searched all a man's physical being to torture him, and all a man's soul for some weak spot at which to seduce him from allegiance to Jesus Christ, was gone through. The rack failed to shake the brave purpose of Januarius. Next day they placed him in the amphitheatre, and loosed great hungry wild beasts upon him. The hungry beasts calmly dropped before the man of God and licked his feet! The Governor, crying out that by magical art the man had laid his spell upon the animals, mounted his tribune to pronounce sentence of decapitation. Before uttering the sentence he was seen to hesitate, then stagger; he was smitten blind! Absorption in his own misfortune might have distracted him from further immediate harassing of Januarius had not the Christian hero prayed the Lord to restore his lost sight. The prayer was heard. The Governor's first glance with his new-gotten sight was a glance of fresh hatred on the man of God, who then, at the tyrant's bidding, had his head cut off! That martyrdom of St Januarius, brethren, presents to the thoughtful

student of Christian history, in compendious form, the philosophy of God's requirement in those whom He will vouchsafe to illumine with His saving grace of faith. Pagan with normal use of reason, and free from the wickedness that would have interfered with the authority of the moral sense in a pagan—accustomed, moreover, to look straight with the interior eye—seeing a man come forth unharmed from fiery furnace, though he might not have at once cast himself at the martyr's feet and acknowledged his teaching, would at least have made serious reflection. He would have recognised the interference of a higher power operating in the doomed one's favour—the interference, at least, of his own gods. Serious reflection in one of simple heart would have disposed a little for the action of grace, which bounteous Heaven is ever ready to bestow. Grace would have aided the sincere soul to further salutary thought, disposing for additional grace; and the oft-witnessed gladsome thing would have been accomplished—unbeliever brought by the free compulsion of Divine wonders, and the gentle power of the Holy Spirit, to faith, to God's love, and eternal life. But consider the man presented for our study in the historical episode just told. The hand of God wrought stupendous prodigies before him —all in manifest endorsement of the Christian religion. His omnipotence made naught of the destroying energy of the fire; His grace made naught of the terrors of the rack to break the fidelity of His tried servant. Then did Heaven smite his own person, with certainty to every onlooker whose malice had not distorted natural judgment that the dark cloud which came down upon him and shut out the joyous light was portentous visitation. Next in this shower of gracious intimations which the Lord poured on that man was the double prodigy pressed upon his very person by a God of untiring mercy—the physical wonder of his restored sight, and the moral miracle of the afflicted servant of Christ, fresh from the raging furnace, aching in every limb from the cruel rack, remembering the attempt to mangle his poor body by wild beasts' fangs, praying God to pity the monster who was piling tragedies upon his head! Five thousand men, to whom until that hour the

Christian religion was but a mysterious thing to be abhorred or despised, seeing superhuman power and superhuman good flash before them in the miracle of the smiting and the healing of the tyrant, surrendered to the compelling significance of the wondrous thing, and the gracious call of the Spirit of Heaven—they proclaimed themselves believers in the Lord Jesus Christ! The cruel tyrant yielded to no influence of good. Worse than that —each lightning flash from Heaven's omnipotence left his dark soul darker still, and each effort of God's benign Providence—if one may so express it—to touch his heart left that heart harder still! His eye was not simple. He looked not with straight vision at the significance of the wonders displayed before him. He looked, perhaps, to imperial Cæsar with whom it may have been his ambition to find favour; perhaps to the repelling prospect of the coercive law which the religion of Januarius would impose on his evil passions. And, like many a one before and since, for want of simplicity—simple gazing on truth, according as truth is shown to one, and simple following right, according as right calls one—he knew not the thing that was to his peace; he missed the call of saving grace. On that day of spectacular manifestation of the truth of the Christian Church, one man of crooked heart stayed without, gnashing his teeth in hateful rage; while five thousand simple souls entered into the eternal feast!

By the same blessed disposition, which ever disposed for faith, do men hold fast the precious thing. Temptation against faith, brethren, is among the possibilities of the spiritual combat. And, as in the matter of the body's health, men do not await the hour of death to preserve life, but long years previously watch the minor perils, and use the minor precautions and healing agencies, they who prize God's gift of faith watch lest disimprovement of the soul's condition should manifest itself, and the series of small illnesses which at later date lead to death should begin their work of destruction. "I fear," wrote St Paul to his spiritual charge at Corinth, "lest, as the serpent seduced Eve by his subtlety so your minds should be corrupted, and fall from the simplicity that is in Christ."

Fall from the sound health of faith; from the robust strength of faith; all which the Apostle would name—fall from the simplicity of faith!

Tragic fall is there. Tragedy within tragedy, and tragedy enhancing the evil of other tragedy. He who falls from lofty tower and is not killed has the fact of the fall notified to him and kept before the mind by the very pain it has caused. He who falls from high estate and ample fortune feels that he has fallen, and has either the desire to rise again or the grief that befits his changed condition. They whose faith is impaired lie under misfortune of peculiar character. Elymas, in the Bible story, who perpetrated the brutal crime against charity of seeking to turn the mind of the proconsul from true religion, when the hand of God struck him blind, knew that he was blind, and therefore groped about seeking someone who would lead him. But the son of the Church in whom pride of thought, licence of reading, proud rashness of dangerous communication, or other harmful thing has caused some measure of spiritual blindness—such a one exhibits tragedy within tragedy; for lo! precisely when the light has diminished and darkness of unbelief has commenced to envelop him, he thinks himself in greater light than ever! This, brethren, because the light that should show loss of faith, or injury to faith, is sound faith itself. Wherefore, be we simple in the daily exercise of faith; on God's grace from without, and on simplicity within, does thorough Christian faith depend.

Simplicity! Holy, wise—aye, and dignified—simplicity! The world that now is were much the better for large dose of the blessed thing. Pretence is widespread; wicked deceit is widespread; selfish sagacity masquerading as wisdom makes the world of to-day a sorry sight to the Christian eye. Should the infection of scheming mind and heart and hand spread much more, one would almost long to see some giant, great and good, come from sphere of simple truth, and stalking through the earth, as furious elephant rages through the jungle, unmask the immoral schemes of men, and pull down the unholy works that are based on craft, and in their turn sustain craft. Nor would

one lament if, finding that poison of false civilisation had spread too far for healing, this beneficent power should hand over the administration of the world to those in whom there is no guile, the dear little children! These might not know how to stir up destructive wars for their private ends; they might not form commercial enterprises to inflate the wealth of the wealthy and send down the innocent poor to depths of penury; they would not set up great educational institutions in which the Lord of the world should have no part; they would not light up the countenance with beaming smile, while cherishing envious hate within the heart; nor traverse the land, cajoling the ignorant with crafty speeches. But they could roll their hoops, and shoot their marbles, and gather daisies, and play with their dolls, and make castles of the sand, and tumble in the hay-loft, and, with delighted angels smiling around them, and God from Heaven blessing them, make the world simple and beautiful!

THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

Fourth Conference: Unworldliness.

THE last element in the Christian character to which it has been judged well to invite your thought, brethren, is unworldliness.

Unworldliness means, one needs scarcely say, freedom from worldliness; freedom from what is called the spirit of the world, from harmful love of the world, from harmful obsequiousness to the world. The name of the entity which moralists treat of as the world is familiar to us; it may be questioned whether we know sufficiently well that for which the name stands. For one dealing with the subject within the scope of this course of lectures, logical order would demand that exposition of what is meant by the world should come first, and only then a setting forth of the place it occupies in relation to the building up of the Christian character. But from the peculiar nature of this matter it is desirable to invert the usual order. Only they who know what the Divine Founder of our religion has taught concerning the world are likely to address themselves with due care to study of its meaning.

I shall, therefore, read to you, brethren, as brief a list as one may of the Scripture texts which show what the God Who made and will judge us thinks of the thing, the power, institution, system—call it what you will—known as the World.

Hear in the first place the words which tell that the world is something distinct from our Lord's portion of the human race. Our Lord's portion of humanity—His followers, their relations with their Divine Master, the business they have to transact with Him, our service of God, and ourselves looked on as serving God—all that class of

thing is on one side, and the world, whatever it be, is on the other. Nor is it merely the distinction that might be between diverse things belonging to the same general category, or between two departments of ways and means subordinated to the same end. It is the separation of things which have naught in common that is set forth in the Divine Word between the world and the Christian body. There must be few in this assembly who are not familiar with the sentence in the first chapter of St John's Gospel read almost every day throughout the year at the close of Mass—"He was in the world, and the world knew Him not." In His prayer made at the Last Supper our Holy Redeemer said to the Eternal Father, referring to His followers—"They are not of the world" (St John xvii. 16).

We are soon made to see that it is not mere separation, as of things indifferent one to the other; not the separation that is between citizen of this country and citizen of a far distant country that is meant; and that the world's ignorance of God is not the ignorance of the far-off stranger who has not heard of Him. For our great teacher, St Paul, directing the faithful at Rome on their attitude towards the world, said—"Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. xii. 2). We shall wonder but little that the Apostle should write that warning when we hear another word of the Divine Master; it is in the fifteenth chapter of St John—"If you had been of the world the world would love its own; but because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you!" What thought and feeling must have been in His listeners at those words! What amazement must have been displayed in every countenance at the sensational description of the relations between the world and their Divine Master! And surely their amazement grew when they heard Him continue—"If the world hate you, know ye that it hated Me before you!" One of the men who heard the startling language, who had listened likewise to His prayer at the Last Supper, and at that memorable feast had drawn into his heart and brain the thought and feeling of the Divine Master as he reposed on His breast, summed up

for our guidance the relation between what is called the world and the members of the Christian Church, and wrote it in these words—wrote it, not to the seventy-two disciples, not to the inmates of a monastery, but to the mass of the faithful: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world is seated in wickedness!" (1 John v. 5).

Does this language of Holy Writ refer to some monster that stalked abroad in the days of our Lord's mortal life to the imperilling of men's spiritual weal? Are they to be understood of some institution of evil which darkened the earth, and made grave prejudice to the Divine interest, when the Church was young? Were it so, we whose day of probation is now might dismiss the subject from our thought, or have it in mind as a matter of mere academic interest. It is not so; the baneful thing the sacred pages have denounced is still with us: the world, the flesh, and the Devil are the trio of hostile forces against which our striving for eternal life has to be done. Who, then, needs the assurance that it is of grave moment that we should know what is this agency for evil reprobated in the Holy Book? I wish I could tell. It is scarce possible to set forth, at least in precise speech, what the thing is against which God's sacred word has discharged that strong denunciation. However, let our thought move over the matter in short paces, and with the aid of the Holy Spirit we may teach ourselves sufficiently what it means.

Do the multitude who are in sin constitute the world? No. Does it mean those who make up the population of some specially wicked country? No. Is it the mass of heretics, infidels, and Jews? No. Perhaps it means the Governments who in our day persecute the Church, and by immoral education laws aim a deadly blow at the spiritual interests of poor children. Most assuredly these are of the world; but to the query—What is the world? he does not give accurate reply who says that it is those wicked Governments. They are not the moral entity which corresponds to the term—the world—as reprobated in Holy Scripture.

What, then, is the world? Who are they that compose it? They who compose it are not dwellers in some

remote region of the earth unvisited by us. They are not a special group of mortals whom the Creator has rendered invisible. Men and women of the kind we ordinarily see and live with and read of make the world. We cannot distinguish them as we can those of a certain religious body, or certain nationality or trade or profession. They being what the Gospel tells, 'twere well if we could. The beings who constitute the world are of various countries, of various social classes, of diverse occupations. No register is kept of them as of the members of societies we commonly hear of, with name, person, and residence to secure their identification. Nor are they a fixed quantity. One may form a unit in the aggregate of the world to-day and be no longer of it to-morrow, and in the course of next week become part of the evil thing again. Of a household situated in the midst of a Christian community, five members may be part of the world, and the sixth, dwelling beneath the same roof, eating at the same table, accustomed to worship in the same Church, may be outside the world circle. Men at the commencement of a spiritual retreat may be of the world, and be emancipated from its baneful thraldom at the close of the season of grace.

The genesis of the thing is probably to be traced to the mass of sin that has been from the beginning of human history. The countless millions of offences against God are a great sore, the pustules of which give out noxious matter creating unwholesome atmosphere for men to breathe. The pestilential air bred by bodies left to putrefy on field of war comes from death and leads to death, yet may be walked in without ensuing death. So with the evil moral atmosphere generated from lengthened tradition of sin: from souls' death it has come; to souls' death it leads; yet it is not itself spiritual death, for one may be of the multitude that constitute the world, yet be not himself in the state of sin. The genesis of "the world" may be conjectured in another way. Men who have gravely transgressed the Divine law and been restored to grace do not in all instances go back to the level whence they fell. There can be requisite disposition for the Lord's forgiveness,

and yet some disimprovement as result of long abiding in sin; there can be a sympathy with certain things allied to the evil life that has been abandoned, and less fear than is desirable of things which contain risk of temptation. Joining in our thought the many who may be thus disimproved by habits of wrong and the many actually living in sin, and wedded to sin, we are prepared to find that customs have sprung up amongst men in the establishment of which evil passions had their say. These customs, offsprings of sin, are an influence leading in the direction of evil; they are part of the world. Customs involving varying degrees of danger have become an institution, having its principles and maxims, speaking a language of its own, and exercising a power over men which gives it high place among the forces which are opposed to the interests of the Most High.

Let us glance at some of the operations against men's spiritual weal carried on by those principles, customs, and spirit which may be said to constitute the world. First evil working of it: it renders notable assistance to the other great enemies of our salvation. Struggling mankind has to face the world, the flesh, and the Devil. In their plots for souls' destruction, Satan and men's passions receive important, and, in some instances, decisive aid from the world. You know, brethren, that of animals employed in the chase some start the game for others to pursue and kill. Are there not pointers and setters—animals that seek out and indicate the prey which hunting dogs are to pursue? So does the world ferret out the game for the demon and the flesh to destroy; and it points and sets unto the same sad purpose. The world does not say to a man: "Do that sinful act." That were direct killing. Setting and pointing are the world's allotted part in the tragedy. The world says to him: "Fall in with this social custom"—the social custom being one which increases the probability of temptation. There are ladies to whom Satan and evil passion will not suggest forbidden sensual gratification, but to whom, in Satan's interest, the world will suggest failure in the decorum of dress which Christian modesty demands.

The world leads souls into the numerous traps which the Evil One has set for them by giving nice names to wrong, and danger of wrong. Thus does it cover the traps to make men easier prey to the fell enemy. Not always, if indeed ever, calling deadly sin by soft name, it has a soft name for that which leads to deadly sin; it asks what harm there is in that which is certainly harmful; twits men with scrupulosity because they manifest a right conscience. No Christian whose heart is well disposed is ignorant of the evil it is for a man to have his salutary apprehensions lessened and counsel of unwise trust whispered to him in the very hour when conscience should be alert in holy fear and the soul armed for deadly fight, or planning escape from some threatening peril.

The condemnation we read of the world in Holy Writ is justified to every mind that marks the counteracting of the Gospel teaching of which this mischievous thing is guilty. Take the main positions in the Gospel moral system—the great principles designed and promulgated by the Redeemer of men for our guide and protective rule of life. Having them before the mind, note the principles whereby the world seeks to dominate men's lives, and see that the wicked institution is in marked opposition to the Divine Master's teaching. Read aloud the Beatitudes. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," said Jesus Christ; the humble He meant. The world does not believe Him! "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you . . . and speak all that is evil against you." They who have learnt their lesson from the world hold for most certain that when people speak all that is evil against a man it is proof that he has done wrong. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice." "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after gold!" shouts back the world's oracle. Read again from the Gospel: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice!" My dear brethren, it almost sounds a thing to provoke a smile. If embodied in pious publication now, unless the printer appends a foot-note telling that it was whispered by mediaeval sage in hermit cell to some rare enthusiast stirred by spiritual ambition, this sounds an unintelligible thing in the world of our

day. Who, gazing on the vast stage whereon the world plays its part, noting the direction in which the great stream of men's activity flows, marking the tone and trend of men's daily speech, observing their ordinary choice of matter to read, listening to their favourite subject of conversation; who, desirous to construct principles from acts, to infer theory from common practice, would judge that every man, woman, and child the wide earth over has been set in life to serve God, and prepare for the life to come? This philosophy, this thing from the shades, this dream of hermits and mystics—they who now regulate the programme smile at the folly of it: the counter-Gospel all but cries aloud to its disciples: "Seek ye *last* the Kingdom of God and His justice."

But the world's opposition to the Gospel is often pursued by crafty methods. This wolf sometimes dons clothing of sheep. It counterfeits the sacred teaching of the Divine Master. Over the garden wall enclosing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, where the Divine Husbandman and His Apostolic helpers sow the saving seed, and where grow the things which give health and strength to souls, this wicked world sends an imp to steal the labels that mark the plants which bloom round the Tree of Life. Those labels the world attaches to useless things that grow in the unblessed soil without. Look at one amongst the things which the world calls charity! "Mere smoothness of social intercourse" Father Faber well characterised it. Well-oiled parts of a machine move agreeably in juxtaposition. Prescinding from all spirituality of motive or aim, soft words, bows, and smiles are more pleasing to nature than the opposite attitudes. But the world, teaching its votaries the bows and smiles and soft speech, labels these things with the honoured name of charity. There is worse wherewith to charge this agency of evil. The world's most insolent counterfeiting of the Holy Gospel in this age is done under the mask of prudence. Prudence is one of the cardinal virtues. Ever constituting part of the natural law, it was consecrated by the Gospel, and accorded a prominent place in the array of spiritual beauty wherewith the saints sought to grace themselves before the eye

of God. That imp which the astute world sent over the garden wall stole the prudence label, and the astute world has attached it, not to a mere useless plant, but to the poisonous weed—immoral cowardice; the cowardice that is bold with God, while trembling before man. Of much evil for the first sinning pair are we all the inheritors—may God help us!—but one may question if there be a thing amongst all immoral possibilities that shows such insolence of iniquity as the dressing up of grave sin so as to pass it off for the holy virtue of prudence. The earth is darkened by men now who, were they in Jerusalem on the day when the first head of the Church was arrested and put in jail, would have lectured him on his want of prudence, and shown that it was very wrong of him to have obeyed the command of Jesus Christ, seeing that obedience to Jesus Christ involved him in personal inconvenience! Prudence—beautiful, sanctifying virtue—what outrages are done, what things of grave obligation omitted, in thy name!

Next evil I bring before you, brethren, amongst the many evil deeds of this bad world: it is jealous of God. It would draw to itself the interest, the activities, and the sacrifices which it sees some men render as homage to the Almighty. The unwise mother who has permitted the world to be her teacher is apprehensive of impairing of her daughter's health if the daughter goes to morning Mass. She has no such apprehension of injury to health when she permits, or commands, that the daughter go to a social gathering from which she returns at three o'clock on a winter's morning. The athlete preparing for trial of strength or speed is judged quite right in making rigorous restriction of food, eating uncooked meat, and submitting to other hard conditions at the bidding of his trainer; the same class of hardship were laughed at as folly, or frowned at as cruelty, if borne or imposed for the honour of God. An actor on the theatrical stage must speak his part well; must attend to the pauses necessary for the right effect, and all the detailed rules on which the character of the speech insists. He runs risk of being hissed there and then, and of being immured in workhouse ward in after years, if he

fails to take the time in his recitation which the ordinances of elocutionary art have prescribed. He may hurry through a rosary—as it pleases him! Zeal, sharpened wit, spirit of sacrifice, delicate care for the whole, and for details—let temporal interests have all these; not the Great Lord Almighty!

There, brethren, is the great world against which the Christian is called on to guard himself. A wicked world; an astute world; a world of great power for evil. Take that confession of its power made from the pulpit. That confession is the confession of the intellect, expressed by the preacher's lips, of an unquestionable fact—the fact of the world's power. Confession of the world's power in another sense may not come from the pulpit, for it is harmful. It is the confession that comes not from the intellect, but from the heart, and the expression of it is the homage men pay to the world, which homage contributes to its evil power, and is itself an evil thing. Men fear this thing; individuals fear it; corporations of men fear it; those of lowly rank fear it; so do princes and powers. The world, devising evil, and strong to effect evil, finds a timid attitude in men which facilitates the realisation of its sinister designs. The great wicked power sees men prostrate before it, now in profound bowing of the head, now with swinging of censer as sign that they worship the world. This attitude of men is what the writers of holy books name *human respect*. One can scarce tell which of two things human respect is: a weakness in men which the world avails of to ply its iniquitous purpose, or a limp moral condition which the action of the world produces in men. That question let the psychologists settle. For us assembled in the holy place for our souls' advancement, let there be recognition of the swift and easy progress of the world on its evil way when human respect disarms those who are bound to resist it, and turns them into friendly helpers or dutiful slaves.

Consider, brethren, the working of this strange thing, human respect. You who are fervent in God's cause can shed profitable tears over it; they in whom no warmth of piety glows can find natural interest in the working of

it. See the Catholic of average fidelity to religious practices; a member of some pious Sodality; a monthly communicant. Take him, and many of his sort, as they stand, each by himself, and note a certain degree of conscientiousness asserting itself in each one's life. Place them together; a group in a workshop, or factory, storehouse, at street corner—where you please. What mysterious thing creeps in among them, or is bred within each heart of them, when they are grouped, causing the conscientiousness of every one of them to grow less? The diminished power of conscience permits those men whose necks the Scapular of Our Lady encircles to use for unclean language the tongue on which the previous Sunday the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ rested. With the larger, better conscience which each uses when by himself each would refuse to speak the foul thing; but with the shrunken conscience which each has when in presence of the small world of the group around him, each is ashamed not to offend God!—Other illustration of the mysterious domination of human respect let us glance at. It is supplied by a type of university student found in some parts of the globe. Look on this young man when, with intellectual striding, he climbs Parnassus—when he engages in worthy mental labour at his desk. Or see him taking part in some mixed social entertainment, or walking the highway as one of the ordinary citizens. In those situations he is a gentleman, at least in process of formation. See him on degree-conferring day in the University Hall, or at inaugural meeting of some academic society. What is it that bends him from the way of civilisation—drives him to eschew both Christian and pagan rule of decorum? Wherefore have we to be solicitous lest the papers which next morning tell the story of his roughness shall fall into the hands of the bare-footed child of the primary school, and by its disedifying influence threaten to drag him down to a like unworthy thing? It has been characterised as savagery. That is unjust to the savage. The children of Adam who are in the category of savages have on a certain class of occasions wildly danced, howled, and yelled; but their fantastic revels had some measure of sanction in the intel-

ligent purpose of war to be announced, or religious rite to be performed, or some crisis in domestic or tribal history to be marked. The indecency of University Hall has no tongue to make plea for it, because no brain of man has discovered justification for it. Whence comes it, brethren? It is a phase of the psychology of the crowd. It is a sample of the enslavement there is in human respect. Set down the sense of decency and of Christian law in each of those students taken by himself as of ten degrees; place a hundred of them together in the class of occasion that has been mentioned: the sum of sense of human decency and Christian law in the group is not a hundred degrees multiplied by ten; no—each sheds a portion of his natural decorum and sense of Christian law; is ashamed to be right, and emboldened to be wrong, when Nodding Jove looms above him, the crowd which terrorises the better spirit, while inspiring insolent daring to the inferior elements within him. I suppose we may hold for certain that not one of the cowardly batch would comport himself in this fashion were his decent mother or refined sister standing beside him. "O flumen moris humani! quis tibi resistet?" cried St Augustine—"Flooding tide of human custom, who shall resist thee?" Mystery to the metaphysician, and mystery to the theologian, is this unlovely phenomenon displayed by young men of the two categories mentioned, for they are portion of the population of a country ranking among the civilised, and they are registered as of the Christian body. A mystery indeed; each ashamed of each, and each of all, and all ashamed of each; and each helping to create, and forming part of, the very power to which each and all surrender both reason and conscience.

Brethren, it is part of Christian wisdom to fear the world, endowed with the fell power for evil which we have been considering. No less truly is it part of Christian wisdom to despise it. The Christian fights the world well who knows it for dread agency of spiritual mischief. He fights it the better when he knows, in addition, that it is a thing worthy his contempt. It is as the statue of Nabuchodonosor's dream; all its glittering splendour supported by

feet of clay, which leave it open to easy and humiliating destruction.

To easy and humiliating destruction the great world soon comes. For individuals—and it is the individual who, by yielding to it, is brought to ruin, or by resisting it, triumphs—for individuals the world is destroyed day by day, since day by day individuals go through the gates of death. It is a fleeting show, and bitter disillusion awaits its blinded slaves. The disillusion of those who unwisely fear, and through unwise fear serve the world, is painted by the Wise Man in a most interesting passage of the Book of Wisdom. The great majority, the children of the world who now laugh and sing in the triumphant joy of those who feel they have the better part, and the modest minority, the children of the Gospel, the men and women signed with the Christian character, are confronted after death, and the sacred text pictures the feeling of the undeceived followers of this wicked god of the world. Standing amazed at the suddenness of the unexpected salvation of the faithful ones, they shall exclaim—repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit—"These are they whom we had in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints! Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined upon us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us. We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All these things are passed away like a shadow!" Brethren, this is truth, saving truth—the world is a fleeting show to be despised, and a fell enemy to be combated. Fleeting show, not alone because its spectacular riches and glory shall come to naught, but because its deceiving judgment of things shall be exposed as false. Where we detect its movements against our souls' health, let us stand against it; press against it; allow it not to carry us along its way of ruin.

We are best guarded against this world's perilous seduction when we allow the other world to lay its saving hold upon us. Unto this its attractions must be revealed to us. Let the light from the other world shine upon us; let the voices of the other world reach us; let its music send surging waves of melody round about us, and its sweet perfume be diffused upon us. I translate those counsels into plainer speech: let there be earnestness in spiritual exercises. Spiritual exercises connect us with the world to come. Earnest doing of them is voucher to a man's own conscience of his interest in the world to come. Every well-made prayer tends to foster the spirit that is of the other world. For stronger link of the world to come let us add to prayer reading that is directly concerned with spiritual things. Men must take in, save while they sleep or when reason's action is disturbed, thoughts and fancies which help to dictate the interior and exterior actions that make responsible life. They who take not in, by reading of directly sacred matter or hearing the Word of Life, the thoughts and inspiring suggestions which concern the soul's care and God's service and the attainment of Heaven, must take in the thoughts which move men towards the service of Satan or the flesh or the world. Therefore, brethren, press, if needs be, your faculty of interest towards the things of the world to come. That world is to be our eternal dwelling-place! Its treasures, honours, and enjoyments endure for ever.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

Preached on Occasion of the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament at the College, Mt. St Benedict, Gorey, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, 1909.

"If thou didst know the gift of God!" (St John iv. 10).

How ignorant we are in the things of God! How meagre is our knowledge of the mysteries of religion! Names of those sublime things are familiar to us, and definitions: formulas which are, in some degree, explanatory, our lips can utter: questioned, even in childhood, regarding great truths of revelation, we gave correct reply. But how superficial our thought on those august mysteries. How little are our hearts moved by the wonders we have been taught! As a consequence of the heavenly gift of faith, we dwell, as it were, in royal palace—all round us is beauteous splendour—marble halls, rich-wrought ornaments, glowing pictures, while princes in gorgeous array pass and re-pass each day and hour. Within the glorious palace wherein the children of the Church dwell there are on every side things calculated to arouse the deepest emotions of the human breast; delighted wonder, love and enthusiasm of gratitude. Yet, encompassed from tender years by grand mysteries, we seem blind to the beautiful spiritual sights, deaf to the music of the unseen world, insensible to influences which thrill the angels with gladsome emotion. It is the melancholy truth that things of earth and sense have almost monopolised our thought and interest. The delusive charm of material goods has cast its spell upon us; the world's enjoyments make too loud a noise in our ears, and, in many instances, evil passions generate a storm in men's hearts which silences the voice

of the Divine Spirit when He would invite them to study the noble and precious things whereof faith tells.

This most sacred day calls to solemn thought, and the Christian mind which surrenders itself to the suggestiveness of the beautiful feast we celebrate shall be helped to increased understanding of God's loving economy with mankind. Come with me, dearest brethren, and let us roam for a space through the world of wealth and grandeur which the penny catechism reveals.

Abstract from the festive scene of which we form part, and from the hour that now is, and see, a few years gone, in a district not far removed from where we are assembled, a man of the toiling class walking the furrows of a ploughed field. A satchel hung at his side. From the satchel he drew at regular intervals handfuls of seed, and scattered them over the broken ground. Earth caught those grains, and when the harrow passed over the ground they were buried within her bosom. As time went on her course, while Nature seemed all inactive, the mysterious power wherewith Providence has endowed the soil acted on the seed which the husbandman had entrusted to it; pulverised and made it rot. Process of fermentation was gone through, and, by interesting paradox, destroying influence was revealed as vivifying influence; from death and destruction came vigorous life. When Nature awakened with the lengthening days the earth gently opened and a green blade sprouted forth. It grew and was strengthened, and ere long from its folded leaves an ear burst forth. With increasing warmth from Heaven's sunshine Nature's gracious purpose advanced towards realisation, until on a bright summer's morning there shone before the farmer's gaze a smiling field of corn. 'Twas cut down, thrashed, and winnowed. It was transferred to the miller, who submitted it to the grinding pressure of his millstone and made it flour. A community of nuns who serve the Lord in the Presentation Convent of Wexford town procured a portion of the pure white material, and one amongst them taking the flour blended it with water and made it into bread—bread of the simplest form, consisting merely of water and flour. That bread when baked she

cut into pieces of circular shape; packed them with care to the number of many hundreds, and within the last few days sent a package of them to the Superior of Mount St Benedict. This morning one of them was laid on the altar in the college chapel as the ceremonial of the Mass commenced, and it is now—Oh! brethren, let the farmer who sowed the wheat seed come hither now; let the strong man who thrashed the corn, and the miller, and she who blended the flour and water and baked the same; let the messenger who brought the package of circular white things come—let them all uplift the gaze to that ornate ostensory, and ask—Why those many lights? Why that rich array of fair flowers from garden-bed? Faith will speak reply: that which they contributed to make, that which passed through their hands, was this morning laid on the consecrated table; the priest bent over it, spoke the word which Jesus Christ appointed for him to speak, and lo! by that word's transubstantiating power the simple element of bread was bread no more—changed into the Veritable Body of the Redeemer of the world! The Child Whose birth in the cave angelic choirs announced; the Master Who trod the unstable sea as though it were solid earth; He Whose lordly Voice entering the tomb where a man had lain three days dead called the dead forth to life—He is here. The same Whom they tortured to death on the Cross is here. He Whose Power Divine laid the foundations of the giant mountains, and built up their massive sides, and shot their peaks into the high air; Who drew from naught the measureless ocean and sent it rolling through the centuries; the Creator of the universe; the Judge before Whom we all shall stand in tremulous worship—is here. The living Body of the world's Redeemer, therefore accompanied by His Precious Blood and His human Soul—the Body, Blood and Soul hypostatically united to His Divinity—very God is here, consubstantial with the Father. He it is before Whom we bow down in profoundest adoration. When we rose from sleep this morning He was in His palace of inaccessible light, encircling hosts worshipping round about Him; now is He here beside us on yonder

altar. From the splendour of Heaven to the lowliness of earth has He come; from the ethereal place where congregated millions of pure spirits gleam before His throne in the beauty of His grace to this lowly world stained by myriad sins. And if, as He set forth this morning through the pearl gates of the Kingdom some of His blessed ones had asked Him: "Lord, whither goest Thou?" we are permitted to think that the reply would have been: "I go to the men and women, the youths and maidens who inhabit the earth, for My delight is to be with the children of men." Love for us has been the force that brought Him down! Wondrous was the conception of this Divine Sacrament; stupendous the feat achieved by Divine power in the mystery of transubstantiation; therefore, stupendous is that which has produced this wonder; and that which has produced it—that which led the mind of God to conceive it, and laid hold on the Omnipotence of God to achieve it—was the love that flamed within His heart for the sons of men. And, since no charms were seen in Adam's race to win the Divine love, we must find the secret of it in God's own goodness; then, bowing down before the mystery of that goodness, pour out all the heart's love and the homage of our entire being before Him.

More fervid be the homage, and warmer the love we exhibit to Him, brethren, for that, coming down from the splendours of Heaven to visit us, the gracious Lord has not come to light the world by His presence for brief space as He lit up the Mount of Thabor in the hour of His transfiguration: He comes to stay in our midst. The love that has brought Him to us keeps Him amongst us. He is unwilling to leave us orphans; therefore does He, Father of mankind, dwell with us in this wonderful Sacrament, and for all time. Nor can any varying circumstances of the place we prepare for His sojourning, or of our attitude towards Him, affect the strong purpose of love in His sacred heart. He dwells in the stately cathedral, built up by great faith and wealth in the noble city; with equal truth and with equal love He abides in the thatched chapel on secluded mountain-side. He is there when the faithful throng the holy

place, and the priests encompass his sacramental throne, and swinging censer gives out its sweet perfume, and the choir pours forth the jubilant song of praise: no less truly is He there when the Church is silent and lone, with a solitary worshipper in some shady nook. He is there in cheerful daylight; there likewise in soundless midnight when the Church is closed, and we all, buried in sleep, are forgetful of ourselves and of Him. He abides in that tabernacle of love, not surrounded by angelic guard of honour, who, with flaming swords in hand, watch lest the unworthy intrude into the august presence. No—the high and mighty may come—so may the lowly and simple; the kings of the earth in royal vesture clad; the peasant in his rags, likewise; the shining lights of learning are admitted, and with the same welcome, if not greater, the unlettered sons of toil; the saint may kneel before Him to speak His love, and the sinner to beg His mercy. "Come to Me," is the gracious invitation; but it is "Come to Me—all!" And the love of this loving God grows to our hearts' contemplation as we listen further to His Divine Word—"Come to Me, all you who labour and are burdened." Not that He may gaze upon us as Judge; not that He may rebuke our wrongdoing; let the full melody that issued from His merciful heart sound in our ears—"Come to Me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you!"

They shall tell Him on the doomsday—they shall tell Him during the unending years in the happy Kingdom—the myraids whom He has refreshed from the tabernacle shall tell Him—the long catalogue of blessings He has poured forth on needy souls from this storehouse of grace. They over whom heavy clouds of sorrow hung shall proclaim that from the tabernacle shone the gladsome sunbeam of consolation that brightened their darkened spirits. Many a heart, pierced by the bitter shaft of the hate and injustice of fellow-men, shall speak its grateful homage for that, as it lay in its hour of pain before the Lord on His eucharistic throne, there streamed out from Him Gilead's balm to heal its every wound. Sinners that were—men round whose souls the Evil One had wound the bands that marked them for his degraded slaves—shall magnify the

mercy of the Most High, because when they came and knelt before Him, bowed down under the sense of a thousand crimes, yet with humble trust in His goodness, the dear Lord, from His heart of fire in the tabernacle, sent influence of grace to melt them into contrition, and then whispered to their contrite souls: "Go, show yourselves to the priests," and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation burst the bonds whereby Satan held them captive, and endowed them with the joyous liberty of the children of God.

Brethren, in our study of the wondrous Sacrament, "deep calleth on deep." This is the mystery of greatness transcending the capacity of all men's minds; this is the phenomenon of Divine goodness that is not worthily acknowledged by the burning love of all men's hearts. Wondrous deed of love is that changing of the bread and wine into His body and blood; second mystery of Divine sweetness is this dwelling with us day and night, and welcoming all to His presence; surpassing the intelligence of man's mind, and the red-hot love of all hearts, are these achievements of the Lord's goodness; yet not sufficient evidence of His love! Having climbed one lofty mountain of Divine love, we find another to ascend; and from the summit thereof a third revelation of Heaven's love confronts our amazed spirits. Did I say, dearest brethren, that this Lord, our God, has come down from the glory of Heaven, drawn by love for us? that He has not left to angels and saints monopoly of the honour and happiness of kneeling before the adorable Heart enshrined on the altar? A more stupendous thing you have witnessed. You have seen walk the nave of your Church, not the great Pope of Rome, wearing his triple crown; not imperial monarch, clad in regal splendour; you have seen the plain man of the crowd, one of yourselves, walk the Church nave and kneel at the altar rail; you have seen the child from the poor school, insignificant item in the great world's aggregate; you have seen the poor old woman—kneel there, open the lips and receive as food the Almighty God! Oh, brethren! what a thing is this! See that aged woman rise from the banquet-table to return to

her quiet corner in the House of God. As she proceeds with slow pace, trembling for the enfeeblement of age, with shrivelled features and snow-white hair, and clad in the raiment of the poor—let us lay rich carpet for her feet to tread; let all the people on bended knees line the way she walks, lighted torches in hand, and heads bowed down in solemn adoration! For as truly as He was borne within the breast of the fair maid of Judea who went over the hills to visit Elizabeth and Zachary; as truly as He sits enthroned amid the splendours of the ethereal kingdom, that humble creature, by the privilege given her through Christian faith and membership of the One True Church, holds within her the Eternal Son of God—Creator, Redeemer, and Judge of the whole human race! Ah! Reverend Fathers, why ask me to preach on this sublime thing? Borrow some grand archangel from Heaven, and let him, with tongue touched by burning coal from the fire of the Holy Spirit, utter the speech which will stir such thought and feeling as befit us when we contemplate this amazing mystery of the Lord's love!

Not for this heavenly gift alone should we render thanks, but also for our supernatural knowledge of the same. For many are they who know not this delightful fact of God's economy with men. Find the profound philosopher on whose word of high-reputed wisdom thousands hang; find the keen searcher into the secrets of science; the most famed teachers of all the universities; consult the writers of the books eagerly read by millions, and that bring fame to those who produce them. Ask those men what the sacred vessel enclosed in the tabernacle or borne in our solemn procession contains. With nature's highest faculties to guide them they will demand to be allowed to apply their senses of touch, sight and smell, and will tell that it is now what it was yesterday—bread. Those honoured masters of men know not what it is—absolutely know not. None of their imposing books declare the exalted truth; not one of their stately universities instituted for mere earthly purpose teaches it. No laboured study, pursued through long nights and days, discovers it,

though he who studies be gifted genius with his intellect pressed to its extreme endeavour. This brings to mind the prayer of the Divine Master—"I give Thee thanks, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones." The "wise and prudent," too great in their own conceit to be humble children of the Church, know not the sublime secret that is hidden on the altar—the precious treasure we have just borne round these grounds in festive procession. It is faith alone that sees this great thing, and faith, vivid faith, faith which draws one near to the sweet Lord in love and receives the fullness of His eucharistic blessing—is the faith of the "little ones," the simple servants of God.

Let me tell story of a "little one" in whom that word of the Divine Master was verified in striking fashion. It is the tale of a child younger than the youngest of those who have walked before the Sacred Host on this blessed day. A very few years since she was nothing. When the present Supreme Pontiff ascended the Chair of Peter she had not been yet born. She appeared on earth in the month of August, 1903. While she was still in infancy her mother was taken off by consumption, and her father, a soldier stationed in the south of Ireland, felt compelled to place the child in the industrial school in charge of the Good Shepherd Nuns in the city of Cork. The little creature was received there in the month of May, 1907, being three years and nine months old. She was then seriously invalided, so that the doctor ordered her immediate removal to hospital. It was found that nothing could be done for her, as the saying is, and she was brought back to the Good Shepherd Nuns, with the assured statement of the medical men that there was no hope of recovery. A nurse was provided for the little invalid by the kind nuns. Seeing that the nurse could not be always in attendance on her, one of the elder girls under training in the industrial school was deputed to watch over her in the nurse's absence. This girl was the occasion of the first revelation of God's wondrous illumination of the Infant as to the Holy Sacrament of the altar. One morning

the girl, not feeling well, was unable to assist at Mass and receive Holy Communion as was her wont. Of this the child could have no natural knowledge. Entering the room where her young charge lay in bed, the girl heard with amazement the little one say: "You did not get Holy God to-day." Noting that, besides the wondrous knowledge in the child's mind of the omission of her Communion, there was indication of grief in the young heart in consequence, the girl determined with herself that henceforth, whenever impediment to her communicating arose, she would move about her room "in her stocking feet," as the people have it, while dressing, and so conceal from the child her later rising, and her absence from Holy Mass. The device was a failure. The girl had recourse to the additional measure of slamming the doors through which one should pass in going to the chapel. To no avail. Each omission of Communion the child knew with certainty, and to all inquiries as to how she came to know it, she but replied—"I know you did not get Holy God to-day." It was the custom there, as in all religious houses, to have exposition of the Adorable Sacrament on the greater festivals. The child, detained by her tender age and by grave illness on her tiny couch in a cottage that stood in the convent garden, and which met the necessity of isolating her from the other children, not hearing from any human informant that the Holy Sacrament was exposed, besought the nurse on those days to take her down to "Holy God." Her wish, recognised as the prompting of the Lord Himself, was gratified; she was borne to the chapel in the nurse's arms, and there she remained with the aspect of content which a child feels when the heart is fully satisfied, her hands reverently joined in the attitude of prayer, and her innocent eyes eagerly fixed on the monstrance which contained the Divine Object of her love!

It soon became evident that the Master Whom her illumined spirit recognised thus wonderfully at that tender age was pouring upon her from His heart the special strength which the august Sacrament has been instituted to impart. The dread consumption caused in that poor

child the effect which is found to follow from it in not a few instances; the little creature underwent excruciating pain. But when torture visited the small body the young soul within, rendered great and strong by the action of the unusual grace that Heaven bestowed, received the suffering as coming from the hand of her Divine love, and as favouring her by resemblance to His Suffering Self. In the crisis of pain she tightened her clasp of the Crucifix, and said to those who chanced to stand near—"Holy God suffered on the Cross for me!" The Divine Master was teaching this innocent spouse of His the secret He was wont to teach His saints. One day she addressed a strange request to the nurse—"When next you go down to the chapel to get Holy God, come back and kiss me!" There was the spiritual perception bestowed from above, and growing in this chosen child of four years! "I have understood more than all my teachers, because Thy testimonies are my meditation; I have had understanding above the ancients, because I have sought Thy commandments!" This word of holy David might the child of election have spoken for herself. To enfold the nurse in her arms and imprint loving kiss upon her while the aroma of her union with Jesus Christ was fresh upon her seemed to the enlightened spirit of the little one delight surpassing all that her coevals are wont to draw from brightest toys and most delicious sweets.

With increasing perception of the Divine charms of the eucharistic mystery there came in the youthful soul longing for that union to which love inclines. "I want Holy God," she began to cry. "I want Holy God; I wonder when will He come?" "Mother," she said to the Superior, "when you get Holy God to-morrow, bring Him up to me; I want Holy God!" And when the morning came and she received not the object of her yearning, there was sad sense of disappointment. That child of four who had no tear for her sharp pangs of illness, wept because the God Whom her soul loved was not given to her! Then was observed an interesting thing in the brief but significant spiritual history of the young creature. Heaven's light showed her that her ambition

was about to be realised, and she was at peace. She ceased to beg for Holy Communion; but it was when it had been resolved by the priest and nuns that she was quite prepared by her knowledge of the adorable Sacrament to be admitted to the Holy Table. The announcement having been made to her that she was to be united to our Divine Lord, she burst out into joyful exclamation—"I will then have Holy God in my heart!" All the eagerness of yearning, accustomed to display itself so vividly in childhood, was in her case focused on the single object of union with her Divine love.

On the first Friday of December in the year 1907, she was brought in the faithful nurse's arms to the altar, and on that day of many blessings the Eternal God gave Himself to His chosen child. After the Heavenly Visitant had entered her breast the congregated nuns and children looked upon her; they saw the tiny, emaciated hands reverently joined, the lips moving in prayer, while over the pale face a preternatural light shone. All felt, with quickening emphasis of faith, that God was there, reposing within the breast of the little one, and enriching her still more with His precious gifts. As the faithful guardian of the little invalid bore her out of the chapel, the little invalid bearing within her unspotted breast the Lord of Glory, reverent serenade of the Holy Redeemer and of His child friend was sung by the large assemblage of youthful maids, all conscious of the spell that was upon them from the wondrous child of destiny that was in their midst. Two days went by, and it was the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Again did "Holy God" give Himself to His chosen one; again did the heavenly light overspread her countenance. Thenceforth, almost every day, the young soul that had so hungered for It fed on the Bread of Angels. The sun that rose to gladden the world with his morning beams sent out less bright and joyful warmth than was in little Nellie's heart each morning at the prospect of possessing the heavenly treasure.

The ethereal thirst felt by St Catherine of Siena came upon the poor child; for soon scarce could her caretaker sleep throughout the night, the voice of the child pleading

and questioning—"I want Holy God! O Mother, will it soon be morning? I want Holy God!" Bidden to sleep, as it was still night, and the priest should not arrive till after some hours, the loving heart went on to plead—"Mother, go for the priest and tell him that I want Holy God!" The wished-for hour came; the wished-for Visitant came, then the enfeebled child asked them to turn her to the wall that she might "talk to Holy God!" As the days went by the wonder grew; the angel who had been commissioned with the charge of the favoured child was busy bearing gracious messages from His King to the lowly, suffering creature. God in the tabernacle, ignored by "the wise and prudent"; howled at in that very year by organised fanaticism across the water, and refused passage through the streets of London by the head of the Government; treated with coldness by multitudes of them that say they believe, found His delight in the tiny, pain-racked, consumptive infant in the city of Cork, and she, seeing in the flooding light of grace what a thing it is we have in the most holy mystery, was rendering Him the entire love of her little heart, made great by His expanding grace; giving Him all her thought, all her ambition—her entire being. She gave Him her infant body to afflict, if it pleased Him; for His love no complaint issued from her through the protracted agony of dread disease. When that tortured body was sufficiently worn away, on the day of the Immaculate Mother's presenting Her Divine Child to the Eternal Father in the Temple of Jerusalem, the same Divine Child presented His loved one to the Eternal Father in the Temple not built with hands, where they enthroned and crowned her amid the plaudits of the beatified friends of God.

Brethren, one may entrust to your Christian discretion the application of that story to your individual lives. It preaches faith and hope and love; it exhibits to our Christian ambition some picture of what we may look for if we strive after simplicity of heart and life. It stimulates to loving union with the Divine Lover of us all in the tabernacle. St Philip Neri, rapt in ecstasy on the altar amid Rome's religious splendour more than three hundred years

ago, and little Nellie yearning after the same heavenly treasure a few months gone in an Irish town, appeal to us to keep near the loving Lord. As the world grows old the challenge is being even more addressed to us to forget the riches and grandeur and beauty and entertainments of the spiritual kingdom. "Christ or Diana?"—they shouted before the Christian hero in the ancient time. "Christ or Self?" is a challenge to be met with in all times. Christ hailed with flowers and lights and banners and hymns and devout prayers in Corpus Christi procession, or a tournament in the sporting field—this new formula tests the faith and supernatural spirit of many a young man in the crucial age that we have reached. This is the day whereon to rekindle and warm to higher degree the best love for our Sacramental Lord we have ever conceived. And with the picture before us of the privileged child whose story I have recounted, and the bright picture before our eyes of the bright array of children who make large part of this procession, it seems the day whereon to ask the Sacred Heart that is within the Holy Host to smile on the Christian youth assembled here to honour Him, and pour large blessings on them.

Time was when no crowds might troop over this verdant plain and those smiling uplands save those to whom our Christian faith was object of hate and malediction. Time was when the Lord Himself in the Sacrament of His love would have been debarred entrance within this lovely park, which His own right hand made and adorned. But—Herod is dead, and the Divine Child, with His Holy Mother and St Joseph, has come back. The persecuting unbeliever who boasted that he had polished his boots in the fat of a priest's heart has gone, and the habit of the glorious Patriarch St Benedict, well known in these regions generations past, is once more seen amongst us, as the sheltering Providence beneath which tender youth shall be brought up in the way pointed out by Christian faith. Gazing on that noble pile of college buildings; on those verdant terraces rising one from another in handsome tiers; casting the eye over the magnificent grounds hemmed in by those wooded hills and holding in their midst the

lake on whose bosom the sun of gladsome June is smiling; uplifting the mind to the Lord of all the fair scene Whom our eyes of soul behold on the altar—let us call upon Him to multiply blessings on this young Benedictine plant, already giving promise of fruitful development. May He guide and strengthen the disciples of the great father of monks, whom we welcome back to their inheritance! May He bless every boy who enters that picturesque mansion in quest of Christian training! May He Whose sanctifying spirit entered into those boys on their baptismal day increase that spirit within them at their every approach to Holy Communion! May His grace effect that they shall turn their hearts towards Him in this their morning of life; keep near to Him by frequent Sacramental Communion through the coming years of struggle; have cheering sustainment from Him when encompassed by the shadows of death, and when life is over be taken to his embrace in the Kingdom of bliss! Amen.

THE WONDROUS POWER OF CHARITY.

Appeal on Behalf of St Vincent's Girls' Orphanage, Dublin. Preached in the Church of St Saviour, *23rd May*, 1909.

The Lesson assigned to this Sunday within the octave of the Ascension is taken from the fourth chapter of St Peter's first Epistle, and reads thus: "Dearly beloved, be prudent, and watch in prayers. But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves, for charity covereth a multitude of sins. Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring. As every man hath received grâce, ministering the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the power which God administereth; that in all things God may be honoured through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Charity covereth a multitude of sins!" There is need that it cover a multitude, for multitude is the record of human sin. How soon in our lives was the voice of the tempter heard! How soon was the art of sinning learned! How quickly did the child, enriched and beautified by baptismal grace, need the Redeemer's cleansing blood to wash away his stains! Arrived at years of discretion, according to the common way of the world, he used that discretion to devise and perpetrate wrong. The time of youth passed, with growth of body there was growth of evil appetite and of the power of sinning; as the mind learned letters and sciences, the heart acquired the baneful knowledge of new ways of offending the Most High. Ah, yes! let humanity make the sad confession—sin was mixed with childhood's play, with youth's budding ambition,

with the grave occupations of mature years. Recalling the friends of past years, do we not in many an instance associate with them memories of wrongdoing. Looking back on business concerns, do we not find many of them overshadowed by cloud of sin? Conjuring up pictures of life's interesting epochs, and fair scenes of earth which it has been given us to gaze upon, in how many does not the disfigurement of sin befoul the picture which memory draws. The child enters the tribunal of reconciliation to tell his lighter offences; speaks before the forgiving Saviour his sorrow and purpose of amendment; he goes through long years of life with, perhaps, oft repeated fall, and by and by, hair snow-white, step feeble, and bent body leaning on strong staff for support, he enters the same Court of Divine mercy, and has still a tale of sin to narrate, and graver faults than those which in the fervour of youthful contrition he had for ever forsworn! No wonder that in the Holy Book startling formulas are used which liken the transgressions of a single man to the hairs on his head, the sand grains on the seashore, and the countless drops that make up the ocean's vast expanse.

That evil thing, amounting to a multitude in common human life—what is it, brethren? What is its hateful character before God? Alas! though able to plan and execute it, we lack the power to comprehend the evil of sin. Yet, be it with us as with holy David. He confessed his inability to understand the giant evil; but in the salutary pondering of the true penitent he kept his sin ever before him. With no hope to reach adequate conception of the evil, it is good for us to make pious reflection, and aim at ever-increasing knowledge of the wrong that attaches to our transgressions in view of the august claims of God on His creatures.

Firstly then, he who sins revolts against God's supreme authority. God's authority! The first angel who flashed in Heaven's sunlight had God for Master; the last man that shall walk the earth before the trumpet of doom shall be the subject of the same Sovereign Ruler. Through all vast creation does His Royalty extend. On the summit

of the highest mountain; down in the solemn deeps of the sea; through every green vale; over the vast silences of the desert; in every throb of the world's mighty cities —the wand of the Great King is upheld, symbol of His universal kinghood. The cultured men of high civilisation; the mass of wild, shrieking savages; the lowly peasant in his cot; and, with equal subjection, the crowned monarch in his gilded palace—the Divine will is their law.

How admirable is the recognition of His sovereignty through all unreasoning nature! See the cattle browsing in the field: their every movement is according to the rules which the Lord has laid down; the food He has destined for them—that, and none other, do they eat; and in all their simple lives they comport themselves as He has ordained. The fishes that roam through the mysterious depths of the sea—their graceful motion is in consonance with the Great Master's decree. Look upon the rougher departments of the animal kingdom. Enter the jungle where the dread monsters have their home. Note the ways of lion, tiger, panther, and massive elephant: they feed and sleep; they walk, run and leap; they bellow and roar according to the rule of Him Who is unquestioned Master of the ceremonial to all their life. Consider the birds of the air. The same Sovereign Lord do they acknowledge. In diverse forms they build their nests, each following the design which the Divine Architect has traced. After various fashions they fly: ponderous is the sweep of wing made by the lordly eagle as he roams the upper regions pierced by lofty mountain peaks; swift is the rush of the swallow; and of marked interest the jerky stages whereby the lark rises into the higher air. He who would seek the explanation of that variety shall find it in the code of regulations drawn up by the Sovereign Creator. Ask the blithsome lark why he ever sings that merry strain; ask the thrush why he pours out full, round notes; question the golden canary as to the reason of his pleasing tune; or, if wandering through some beauteous vale in foreign land, bid the nightingale tell the secret of the enchanting lay wherewith he renders every lovely scene more fair. Those dutiful creatures will

give answer that their various melodies were arranged by the same Master Who has set the tune for the ethereal song of angels.

Witness recognition of God's royal supremacy in material nature. Ask the north wind wherefore it blows, and wherefore it veers round to east or south. Question the tides why they ebb and flow, and change each passing day their time of rise and fall. Stand on the shore of the sea; gaze upon it when the breath of the storm lashes it into foam, and high billows, meeting in mad contention, send forth their thundering roar. Ask with the child in the story what those wild waves are saying. The ear of faith will hear them proclaim that all their motion is under the masterful hand of Him Who made them. Look on the same mass of waters when, wearied of contention, it lies down in tranquil slumber; ask whose voice has stilled the turbulent elements, and you will learn that the subduing Spirit that has lulled them into sleep is the same Whose creative breath first called them into being. Uplift gaze and thought to the overhanging sky. Question every twinkling star of midnight; it will tell that from God is all rule of its periods and of its cheery shining. The silvery moon—ask her why her precise course, and determined speed across the heavens, and why she sometimes wanes, disappears, returns again with shy advance, and goes her round once more, smiling message of peace on the world of man. She, too, in her growth and declension, in her serene sailing across the midnight sky, obeys the Great Lord of all. Ask the majestic sun, monarch of the realms above, at whose bidding he awakes in the dawn; shoots upwards his gladdening rays from the east; then, having reigned for a space in noonday splendour, goes down into the western sea at evening time, robed in garment of crimson and gold and blue? God it was Who in the beginning kindled the fire in his mighty bosom; and it is God Who directs all his shining and all his varying display of impressive splendour. Long has the great orb obeyed the Divine behest:—he showed the wealth and beauty of Paradise to Adam and his consort; he lit up the rising waters of the flood for Noah, and guided his hand

in the building of the ark; he shone on the insensate men who set the stones in the Tower of Babel; he showed Lot the ruin of the doomed cities; and, still enriched with the full resource of youth, after his many centuries' shining, he pours out on us his daily blessing of light and heat—all at the command of the Omnipotent God! Omnipotent God! All-ruling God! No senseless thing that lies on the earth; no unreasoning beast that treads the earth, traverses the deep, or wings its flight in the air; no one of the countless bodies of light that sphere in stately procession through the heavenly spaces—has ever gainsaid the authority of the Great Being by Whom all things were made. That is the authority which speaks in every law which the sinner trangresses. When round the mountain's base the host of Israel stood in awe, whilst thunders boomed, and lightnings flashed, He Who on the mountain's summit wrote on tables of stone the rule for mankind's conduct was the Supreme God. His sacred rule we break when we sin.

Other evil element is in sin; it is an outrage against Infinite Majesty—God's Majesty—infinite, unspeakable, inconceivable. Of this attribute of the Godhead we may not form picture. Greatness we can think of, and of greatness we can speak; but it is the greatness we have seen, or description of which when read we have adequately grasped. Great we deem that which is great compared with our own being, and its understanding and admiring faculties. To the tiny insect's sight and sense of touch the hand of man, crushing it into death, is great. Men encounter at rare intervals in life certain things which awaken admiring faculty lying deeper down than that to which appeal is made in ordinary human experiences. To the simple peasant, fresh from the cottage in lonely rural region, the city, with its stately buildings and multitudes of men, is great; to the straitened poor great are the piled-up riches of the millionaire; great are the proud monarchs of vast empires; great the towering Himalayas. Many mighty things this earth contains, to enjoy the wondrous sight of which men make large money expenditure. But, brethren, all earth's grandeur and vastness make mere

earth, and earth is but a small item in the aggregate that makes the universe—a speck of being like the dust grain we have seen floating in the sun's beam. Let earth, tiny thing, stand in admiring awe at the great worlds that move in space. Those worlds hold breath, in the oppression of profoundest awe, when gazing on others of far surpassing dimensions; be their proportions beyond all that human speech can name, and their number beyond our reckoning power, they are all things which sprang from naught into being when the Lord's Word gave forth the command of infinite might.

It was sense of the majesty of the universal Creator, not due sense, but worthier than men are used to cherish, that prompted the prophet king to the grand outburst wherewith he closed the inspired chorus of his one hundred and fifty psalms. Warmed to intense fervour of worshipful love by the action of the Divine Spirit, he made appeal to all things to sing the Creator's praise. "Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, sun and moon, stars and light; praise Him, ye heaven of heavens. Praise the Lord from the earth: ye dragons and all ye deeps; fire, hail, snow, ice and stormy winds; mountains, fruitful trees and cedars; beasts and all cattle; serpents and feathered fowls; kings of the earth, peoples and princes, young men and maidens, praise the name of the Lord!" Like thought and inspiration came upon the three Hebrew children who walked unhurt and rejoicing through the flames of the Babylonian furnace. Fervid faith had exhausted expression from their own personalities of the Divine greatness; that fervid faith, feeling the poverty of their own worship, sent out the invitation to all classes of creatures to magnify the Most High—"Ye angels of the Lord, bless the Lord," was their prayer. "Ye heavens—ye waters that are above the heavens—sun and moon and stars of heaven—bless the Lord! Shower and dew, fire and heat, frost, ice and snow, nights and days, light and darkness, lightnings and clouds, hills and mountains, rivers and seas, beasts and cattle, winged creatures of the air, and great whales that swim the ocean deeps—all magnify the Lord!" Thus did they whom plenteous illumining breath of the Divine Spirit filled

yearn to have all creatures, as the several tubes of one mighty organ, make mammoth chorus to exalt God's infinite majesty. Within His Court—that Heaven where He is said in especial sense to dwell—we are wont to picture recognition of His greatness in this, that countless magnificent beings adore Him, ever prostrate before His throne, and that the pillars of the heavenly palace tremble in sight of His tremendous glory.

That majesty of the Most High is dishonoured by sin! It is the great God Whom the sinner flouts in every transgression. When the world was young, and but a single pair of human beings inhabited the earth, choice being given to the woman between the Creator's holy claims and the suggestion of a vile serpent, the serpent's suggestion was listened to, and the Sovereign God disregarded! The same blasphemous form of insult is in every sin; profit or gratification of man is set above the will of the Most High, and therein is outrage of His Sacred Majesty.

Next, man's sin contains the evil element of ingratitude towards the Divine Benefactor. Of all high instincts, that which is strongest in man, most within call when needed as restraining or stimulating motive—is gratitude. Fallen though the race be, this one good is accorded marked recognition in the standard set up in men's mind, and in the forms of men's speech. "Call a man an ingrate," said St Augustine, "you have called him every evil name!"—and the sentence of the ancient Father of the Church expresses the judgment of men in all ages.

And behold, first place in claim to the thankful sense of the human breast belongs to God. At the very root of our being there is imprinted the assurance of God's love. We exist because of God's eternal love! And if, with keenest scrutiny, we review all that belongs to us, all are testimony of the same Divine goodness which brought us forth from nothing. The sunlight of His love is round about us; we stand in the midst of it; we walk ever through it; extending the hand, it is voucher of His love we touch; glancing to every side, proof of the same meets the eye. Hence the painful truth that man, sinning, sins within the very realm

of the Divine benefactions. In his uprising against God's holy law he has God, gracious and beautiful, all around him; while the hand of man is raised to offend the Heavenly Father, the hand of the Heavenly Father is stretched forth to bless the ungrateful sinner. Think on the man, brethren, who, whilst we are here in the holy place, lies a-bed within a few minutes of this temple of religion. He rose yesterday because the call of some temporal concern sounded in his ear; he lies in bed to-day, in pagan sluggishness, because only the call of God through the Church bids him be here when the Great Sacrifice is being offered. The light that shines upon him is the gift of God; the book he reads is the gift of God; the breakfast which his wife brought this morning to his bedside was God's "daily bread," supplied on the Sunday as on the day of work; the air he breathes is from the Lord, ever given him with punctuality of tender love when his lungs demand it; and thus, touched on every side by the evidences of Divine goodness, he does grave offence to the Most High by his scandalous neglect. Think on the lighter fault, failure in morning prayer. Do they who fail herein forget that all the long night, whilst they were unmindful of themselves, Heaven's Benign Providence overshadowed them; that it was the power of God's right hand kept them in life, and that it was not merely the hand of infinite might, but it was also as the hand of tenderest mother fondling her loved child? Hear the man who breaks the law by evil speech, wounding charity, justice, or modesty, or the reverence due to sacred persons and things. It is the tongue which God bestowed on him as precious gift he employs to offend the Giver. The heart swept by vengeful feeling—by the Lord has it been fashioned, and on Him does its every beat depend.

One recalls the unlovely drama of the assembly of the sons of God, with Satan standing in their midst, when one contemplates the black iniquity of our sins encompassed on all sides by the favours of the All-bountiful God. To generate horror of it let us fancy, brethren, the blind man of Jericho, with the eyes on which the Divine Master had just shed the gladsome sunlight, casting glance of hatred

at his Benefactor. Let us fancy the palsied hand which the same gracious power had healed, uplifted to strike the Lord's holy face! Think of the horror of the memory of it unto all succeeding ages did Lazarus, whom the lordly voice of Jesus summoned from the grave, take part in the nailing Him to the Cross. The foulness of these fancied ingratitudes is in our transgressions. Deliverance from sad blindness has not been ours; cure of palsied hand has not been wrought in us; we have not been brought back from the grave; but to God is it due that we have needed none of these benefactions. We have always seen; our hands have not been stricken; from many an illness have we been raised up sound; in many a death-dealing visitation of disease, and many a raging pestilence, have we been preserved by the favour of kind Providence.

Ah, brethren, wondrous, sad, and wondrously sad is the unchanging history of the relations between the Most High and His human creatures: man daily, hourly sinning; God daily, hourly blessing. Those parallel streams have flown on since the world began—man's sin, and God's gracious love. Man's sin—so great in multitude and deformity that were the Lord less great and good—if this kind of thought and speech be allowed—the world's impiety were not tolerated. Being what He is, infinite in majesty, goodness, and all perfection, God bears with us; pities us; calls to repentance and offers full forgiveness.

But He commands to sinful man the destruction of sin. Sin must be undone. The prodigal must return to his outraged father. The multitude of sins must be covered. And, behold, while remembering the heavenly ordinance which bids man undo the wrong whereby he has offended the Most High, we have presented to us the mystery declared in the words read from St Peter, who has delivered to us the message from the Divine Spirit, that "charity covereth a multitude of sins!" And should there be amongst us one who apprehends that his account with Heaven's justice exceeds the reach of the Divine mercy, if there be one who would cry out with Cain that his sins are too great to be forgiven, there lies on the inspired page for him the stronger encouragement of the Wise Man in

the Book of Proverbs—"Charity covereth all sin!" We have been told of one who with the guilt of a single murderous deed upon him felt the stain so enter his being that he asked with agonising cry if "all great Neptune's ocean" should wash him clean from the stain of blood. What wondrous power, then, is this of charity that, endowed as with some virtue of spiritual chemistry, poured on the soul which ten thousand crimes have befouled, renders it clean as the untrodden snow! Eternal torture in the pit of hell avails not to deliver the soul from one transgression; charity, by mysterious spell, understood in the secrets of the Divine mind, but graciously revealed for our stimulating comfort, can undo the evil wrought in the soul by years of Satan's tempting and man's folly!

Herein is high praise, divinely uttered, of the spirit of charity. Study it, brethren, as set down in the third chapter of the Book of Ecclesiasticus: "Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sin." What a striking statement is here! See the large building, occupied by many human dwellers, who in the solemn silence of midnight are buried in slumber. Think of them when suddenly there is heard through all passages, stairways, and sleeping chambers the dread cry of "Fire!" No cry like that to shoot terror through human breast. Men whom pealing of bell from cathedral spire fails to arouse from sleep are stirred to perfect waking sense by the cry of fire. Not rarely the very limbs that had long been paralysed have been made active when the electric current of terror has been shot through a man's being by that cry of portentous meaning. Most markedly is the terror of it shown in that paradox of thought and attitude it produces; for behold in the frenzy kindled in heart and brain by that tragic peril men cast themselves headlong from high places, courting, one may say, what is deemed dreadful death, in order to escape that which universal instinct regards as the supreme horror, fire. Fire! God's agency for the eternal torturing of the damned! In that crisis for those whom the howling flames quickly approach let there be heard the swish of the water stream poured from well-directed tube held in the fireman's hand. At once sun-

beam of hope flashes on the terror-stricken hearts; that water stream is recognised as Heaven's blessed gift. Rushing to quench the material fire, it likewise cools the delirious fever of terror that filled the doomed ones. Water! Let it come in plenteous outpouring! In strong flood let it come! Let it destroy our costliest furniture; render useless our richest robes of State; only let it save us from that death whose horror surpasses all horrors—death by fire! Dearest brethren, what is this that the Lord's own Word tells of charity? "Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sins!" The reason of a Christian teaches that death of the body, be it in never so tragic form, is slight evil if set beside death of the immortal soul, and rescue of the imperilled body meagre blessing compared with deliverance of the soul. Wise thing did St Augustine write, and a philosophy we all must hold by: "That which is not eternal is nothing."

Before that altar on Sunday last, when the Church was consecrating a new pastor for her sacred purposes, in the midst of the liturgical procedure we all bowed down, and at the Church's bidding sent the cry to Heaven: "From everlasting death, O Lord, deliver us!" For, the new Archbishop was being made in order that souls might be saved, and the thing from which God and the Church would save souls is everlasting death; death, the pain of which endures for ever. Charitable almsgiving, the Spirit of God tells us, delivers therefrom! This, brethren, mark you, not by sacramental efficacy. Charitable deeds do not possess in themselves a virtue which directly releases the soul from sin. Only sacraments operate so. They have an innate virtue whereby, given due conditions for their working, they pour grace into the soul. Not so charity. He who, in grave sin, bestows large sums of money on the needy, does not thereby obtain the removal of his sin. It is indirectly that charity operates for the removal of the soul's guilt. Done in good spirit, the deed of charity inclines the Lord to bestow His grace. The grace that leads the unbelieving one to faith; the grace that leads the sinful man to repentance; the grace that assists us to abide in God's friendship—these blessings the Most High

is led to grant to him who deals out his substance to his fellow-man in his hour of need.

Let us rejoice, brethren, for this gladsome revelation. Let your joy be greater for that on this Sabbath morning the occasion of securing this blessing for yourselves is brought to your very doors. Call from God for almsgiving on your part is made here to-day. The Sisters of Charity, who administer the Orphanage in North William Street, stand forth to beg from you. That institution in William Street is a thing of God. It is doing God's work, for God's purposes, towards God's poor. Intelligent philanthropy has gone through the establishment and spoken high eulogy of its operations; recording angels have visited it many a time, and have credited it, in the Book of Life, with many glad fruits of its sacred mission; God ever looks down upon it, and notes the generous men and women of faith who help to maintain the beneficent enterprise. Brethren, for the past six days the shops through the city were open wherein you purchased things to eat and drink, and wherewith to be clothed. They have shut them up for to-day, but we have shop open here where you can purchase that which is beyond all price—God's eternal friendship! Friendship of God! Most solid good in life! Gilead's balm for all the wounds of life! Cheering sunlight in the melancholy darkness of old age! Secret of strong peace in the dread crisis of death, and when death is over, life, health, riches, honour, and bliss for ever!

THE WORD OF GOD.

Four Conferences Preached in San Sylvestro in Capite, Rome, 1912.

First Conference: The Word of God—safeguard against the Passions—in general.

There has been narrated for us by the Evangelist, St Luke, an episode in our Holy Redeemer's public life which contains special interest for the thoughtful reader. The Divine Master had exhorted His disciples to confidence in prayer; He had taught them to address the Heavenly Father in that form of praise and supplication which His followers shall use until the end of time; He had delivered a wretched man from a demon that possessed him; then, seeing that cavilling Pharisees attributed the miraculous power exercised by Him to the prince of demons, and others in evil mind asked a "sign" of Him, He put all those enemies to confusion by a discourse of sublime wisdom. In the crowd which encompassed Him was a woman who saw with reverent wonder the evidence of His power over the spirit of evil, and heard with growing admiration the wisdom that fell from His hallowed lips. Filled with enthusiasm, she lifted her voice from the midst of the multitude, and exclaimed—"Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breast that gave Thee suck!" That woman's cry must have pleased the Holy Lord. It was felicitation to her who was dear to Him beyond all. Therefore is there notable significance in the oracular sentence it elicited from Him—"Yea, rather," said He, "blessed are they who hear the Word of God, and keep it!" No discounting was it of the blessedness uttered of His Holy Mother; but intimation was given from the

source of all truth that, not her dignity as Mother of Incarnate God was greatest in the Divine estimation, but her acceptance and fulfilment of every message that came to her from Heaven.

"Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it!"—Word of God—condition of the soul's life, according to the same Divine authority. The soul's life—of all good things the chief good—only worthy object of man's ambition!

In various ways does the Divine Word bring blessing to the soul, since in various ways is the soul's life imperilled. Let him who would know the diverse forms in which the Word protects spiritual health and sustains spiritual life, hear interesting classification of its manifold efficacy suggested by one eminent among the holy Scribes of ancient days, the man whose inspired heart and brain set the tune of Divine praise for the Church's choirs the wide world around—the sweet singer of Israel, David, the holy king. In his 28th Psalm the royal prophet sets forth in mystic language the influence of the Divine Word: "The Voice of the Lord is in power. . . . The Voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord shall break the cedars of Libanus. . . . The Voice of the Lord divideth the flame of fire. . . . The Voice of the Lord shaketh the desert. . . . The Voice of the Lord prepareth the stags."

First commendation of the Divine Word there uttered is that it is an agency of power. Recall, brethren, its first sounding. Round about the Eternal Being was universal nothing. Into the silent abyss the Almighty sent His lordly voice, and lo! creation sprang forth—from nothing—and lay before Him in its vastness and order, testimony to the power Divine that gave it being. That same power the Word retains when work of gracious mercy, the eternal welfare of souls, is to be accomplished.

Of this saving power the Psalmist gives the sign and measure when he tells that the Lord's voice breaketh the cedars. The cedar symbolises greatness—strength. To Ezekiel the Most High said: "Behold, the Assyrian was like a cedar in Libanus . . . of high stature." Besides, the cedar casts deep shade. Thus, that which exercises

strong influence in souls, casting shadow which obscures spiritual brightness and destroys spiritual beauty—that is the cedar, in evil sense. We recognise in the prophet's cedars the passions of the human breast.

The passions!—Subject worthy of our most serious study; worthy of more serious study than is bestowed on it by the great mass of mankind. Alas! what misdirection of interest is there not in many men! What misdirection of solicitude, of fear, and hate, and grief! As the world's history is spun out, hearts are stirred with anxiety for threatening perils; groans and sighs are sent forth, and many tears shed. But to what manner of peril do anxious hearts vibrate? What are the happenings that elicit cries of pain and flooding tears? What are the tragedies which increase the income of the Press because of the sharpened appetite in the public for the tale it has to tell? When storms blow in furious strength and bring down in crumbling ruins the stately works of man's hands, hearts are moved. When the element which is wont to be the servant and friend of man, fire, becomes enemy of his life and possessions; when, casting off its normal beneficence, it chafes itself to anger, extends itself with portentous roar beyond its allotted bounds, rises into giant conflagration, sends its great lapping tongue into the chambers where men lie in tranquil sleep, or their precious treasures are stored; leaps to highest pinnacle of princely palace, and, in lurid mockery of man's power and ingenuity, wreaks its mission of destruction—then are men smitten to the heart's core with deadly fear. When, down in the abysmal deeps of the mine, colliding of mysterious gases leads to thundering explosion, and fills the sunless chambers with blackened corpses, tears of widow and orphan flow, and even to millions of utter strangers encircling waves of sympathy reach. The world yet reels from the shock that came when in soundless midnight the leviathan of the ocean encountered, like some great ghost gliding through the silent spheres, the mountain of the iceberg, and down through the gurgling waters the great ship went, bearing her human freight of hundreds and hundreds to their nameless tombs in ocean's solemn deeps. By occurrences of

that character is men's faculty of fear brought into play; those are the calamities which set in motion the spring of flooding tears. In those for whom such things monopolise grief and terror, there is the "wisdom of the flesh," which is "foolishness with God." So unwise is the actual moral temper of the world that one must climb the heights of Monte Cassino, or go back to the silent glades of Thebaid, to learn the Christian wisdom that, not from raging fire, not from the dread possibilities of the ocean deeps, not from the mysterious lightning's flash, should man fear worst evil, but from enemies of giant power strongly armed, ever equipped for deadly attack, and all encamped within his own breast—pride, envy—pride's unholy offspring—anger, avarice, all the subordinates of one master passion, comprehensive enough to be named parent of them all, and to stand for them all in the wise solicitude of every Christian soul. To a great machine may the passions be likened; the movement of that machine, all its throbbing life, is initiated and maintained by one central wheel, the disordered love of self. Behold, brethren, the power that aims at directing the thought, stirring the feelings, dictating the speech, and ruling the life of man.

The progeny of diverse passions sprung from this evil root have left their sinister mark in every age of the world's history. From the hour when the faithless pair, heads bowed in guilty shame, slunk through the gate of beauteous Eden into the gloom of exile, the passions have produced plenteous crop of spiritual ruin. Were we to venture on judgment by guess, guess based on antecedent considerations, of the probable moral bearing of the infant race, we should incline to say that it would have lived through a lengthened period of time ere the shadow of sin should intrude upon its peace. Hearing the first parents tell of lost Eden; of their blissful state in that garden of delights; of God's gracious presence and love; with memory fresh in all of the dire calamity of the original transgression—one would look for such rebound of the heart of the entire race against sin as would have long preserved the small population of earth from the folly of renewed transgression. But alas! the cedars had been planted and grown; the passions

were there. Even for the first pair the gloom of exile was made more gloomy, and their tears flowed again, when on a memorable day they came on the body of their child done to death by violence. What was it that slew the body of Abel, and, at the same stroke, the soul of Cain? Passion —unholy love of self! That black murder was but the beginning of a long tradition of evil, all proceeding from the same source. The entire race may be recognised in the traveller who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho; for the entire race went down from the holy Sion of loving union with God, and fell among robbers, who wounded, despoiled, and left it for dying in hapless spiritual condition; those robbers the passions wherewith we are dealing.

Robbers may they well be named. And of what a treasure do they deprive the soul! Think, brethren, of the days of childhood, when the sun shone fair within our innocent breasts. We then possessed the riches of Heaven's grave; the beauty of the Divine image. Attached to our sinless persons by the hand of our very Judge was the warrant which, had death befallen, would have admitted us straightway to the happy Kingdom! Of that happy Kingdom the light, the aroma, the beatifying melody— is God, and God Himself dwelt within us! We carried Him within us as we sat on parent's knee; as we mingled with our tiny playmates; as we handled our infant toys. In that golden age of innocence there stood beside us by night and by day a shining angel of the Lord, and though for countless ages he had basked in Heaven's sunlight and gazed upon its unspeakable glories, he was not so spoiled by the ethereal contemplation as not to take joyous pride in moving about lowly earth in companionship with the celestial riches and rank and beauty he saw within our young souls. Breathes there one here in whom that beauty has been destroyed? In him has supreme tragedy been wrought! As God, the All-wise, beholds him, as the congregated millions of the blessed behold him, as holy servants of the Lord still treading their earthly pilgrimage estimate his condition—he has been deprived of boundless wealth and made poor indeed; he has forfeited exalted rank, and sunk to vile estate; beauty of

soul that no elastic reach of human fancy can picture has been lost to him, and he is defiled with the unimagined ugliness which belongs to the place of everlasting horrors.

Not to judgment of the Lord and His blessed ones alone is the evil to which passion leads the supreme tragedy of a man: all of Adam's race who have played their part on the stage of earthly life, and gone beyond the bourne into eternity—and they are the vast majority—think the same, be their eternal fate what it may. Murdered Abel has no thought now for the cruel blow of the club that smote him; citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah have no emotion to spare now for the blinding fire and brimstone once showered upon them; the doomed victims of Flavian's amphitheatre feel now no least part of the evil which touched them when fierce lion and tiger and treacherous panther flung their dread strength upon them, ate their flesh, crunched their bones and drank their blood; nor do imperial Cæsar and the pagan host, who gloated over the gruesome sight, feel sense of triumph now. For the vast multitude of the dead conflicting thoughts and emotions have been simplified into one thought and feeling; monopoly of mind's power and heart's emotion is claimed, and ever shall be given, to the changeless destiny which has been assigned them —weal or woe—according to the choice made in life of obedience to evil passions or victorious combat therewith.

Even while earthly life runs it course, and to mere nature's judgment, what havoc do not the great human passions effect! To what heartrending sorrows do they not lead! See the demon of war let loose; count his victims; measure the areas blighted by his hosts of destruction. He is the servant of man's passion; the men slain on the bloody field and the widows and orphans who weep in desolate homes are the holocaust offered at the shrine of the pride or avarice of some man, or group of men, that rules. See the blots that befoul much of what is known as "Society." Enhancement of difficulty in keeping the laws of morality by the poor and lowly arises from the picture of corruption exhibited before their eyes by those whose lot is wealth and rank. The mental attitudes, the judgments and tastes which are masters of the ceremonial

to the life of Society—by evil passions, in large measure, are they formed. Consequently, the way of salvation Society knows not. Not even the way of peace on earth does it know. Christian men and women who hear me, envy not the life that flashes in marble halls where unsanctified Society holds stately revel. For all the beauty of form and feature and gorgeous raiment; for all the brilliant illuminations, aromatic perfumes, bewitching music, festive conversation and tempting viands, which lead the thoughtless to call it a palace of delights, it is oft, to the discrimination of guarding angels who look upon it, a veritable chamber of horrors, since in those fair-tinted assemblies of humanity the worst passions of our fallen nature rule. Hands are grasped in profession of friendship whilst the hearts that own them quiver with hate; eyes beam cheery welcome while the spirit within wears repelling frown; lips utter the speech of courtesy which conceals sentiments of haughty disdain or angry pride. Gruesome testimony to the spoiling of even temporal happiness, for a large percentage of them that compose the more elevated strata of social life is found in this—that not rarely, and with every passing day less rarely, they who laugh and sing and dance and feast in the vortex of the world's entertainments bear on their persons, in the very midst of their unhallowed amusements, the means wherewith science has supplied them of putting an end to the life which surrender to evil passions has made unbearable.

See, brethren, the type which painful experience has led some of us to encounter of this destruction of natural peace and well-being effected by evil passions. Not to-day—not yesterday—did he commence to darken human life. The reading world has heard the name of the famed painter, Leonardo da Vinci. Da Vinci required for the perfecting of one of his great works delineation of the features of the prince of traitors, Judas Iscariot. He sought far and near for a model who should exhibit in his countenance the extreme of repellent malice. After long searching he found one whom vice had so mastered that the expression of the face was darkened and coarsened, hateful horror being depicted in

every feature. The deft hand of genius transferred to the canvas the repulsive degradation of his model. Ere the wretched man left the studio, after his last sitting, he addressed the artist: "You painted me before." Da Vinci, feeling that had he but once seen the man the memory of him could never have gone, questioned the statement. The statement was repeated: "You painted me before. I sat to you for Jesus Christ!" It was true. He had had his day of innocence. He had known the day when beauty of feature was his, with grace of manner and bearing, all faint reflection of the ethereal thing within his soul, and the great artist's discriminating eye had chosen him when he would set forth on glowing canvas the Face whereon angels love to gaze! Moral revolution had come; the gold had been obscured; the finest colour changed; the crown of the dignity of innocence had fallen from him, when the "cedars" cast their unholy shadow, and extinguished the sunshine of grace within him!

That tragedy is renewed each day that passes. Every Christian man who holds his loved child on his knee, clasps him in fond embrace, drinks draughts of happiness from the innocent eyes that send responsive gaze of love into his, has warrant for the depressing fear that the dark story of Judas may be repeated in his dear one! Nay—for his own self must each one of us be apprehensive. That questioning of the soul—every wise Christian makes it—"Where shall I be during the eternal years? When ten hundred times a million cycles shall have gone, and thence for ever and for ever, shall I sit on one of the thrones in the happy Kingdom, or shall my place be where men suffer unending pain?" That questioning of the soul is pertinent questioning for every child of Adam—pertinent because of the possibility of victorious attack on the soul's life by some evil passion. For, not at distant range is that enemy marshalled; no rolling ocean needs he to traverse, nor lofty mountains to pass, in order to discharge his weapons of death against us. "The enemies of a man are those of his household." We carry the instrument of the soul's ruin within our breasts! Readily, and with

utmost facility, may it be set in motion for our destruction. The commonest daily experience—ordinary conversation, some familiar sight that meets the eye, the reading of a letter, the mention of a name—may set the deadly engine to work, and then between us and perdition there is but the frail strength of a man's weak will! For this, brethren, all, whether in high station or low, who possessed the wisdom of faith, have shared the thought and sentiment of the saints; they have heard with reverence enshrined in their hearts, and been ever governed by, the oracular sentence of the Divine Master: "Be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. . . . Fear ye Him Who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear ye Him!"

"The Voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars." To hold back the heart that would yield to passion's fatal seduction; to uplift those who have unwisely yielded, God's Sacred Word supplies Divine efficacy.

St Paul names the Divine Word the very "Power of God." Good right had the great Apostle so to name it. In his own person there was given to the world signal illustration of its blessed power. Time was when he whom we venerate as the Lord's glorious Apostle was an enemy of Christian truth. When Judaism was orthodox religion, Saul, as his name then was, fervidly professed it, and was loyal to its teaching. Christianity introduced by the world's Redeemer, Judaism was to cede place, and disappear. In Saul humanity's evil leaven wrought; what had been faith and religious ardour became proud assertion of self; he clung with obstinacy to the traditions of his fathers after they had outlived the Divine sanction. In that spirit he hated the Christian religion; he hated the very name of the Divine Redeemer and all who professed the new Creed. Persecution inaugurated against the infant Church, foremost was he to strike. The Holy Book tells of him—"He made havoc of the Church; entering in from house to house, and dragging away men and women, he committed them to prison." When they killed St Stephen Saul was there. To hurl stones on the martyr's head, as did the common haters of Christianity, would not content

his zeal. Rather would he, by holding the clothes of the other executioners and so leaving their arms free, feel that he had share in every murderous blow dealt on Stephen's fated head! This was the man who, on a day memorable in the history of religion, set forth for Damascus, thence to bring the followers of the Divine Lord in chains to Jerusalem and deliver them to punishment. On that journey of evil purpose he nursed his angry hate. The sacred narrative describes him as "breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." He was the embodiment of passion—strong, overmastering passion. But man's unholy purpose was to be overruled by the gracious mercy of Heaven. Whilst he rode on his way he received a check. A strange power, exercised from a source he knew not, stayed his course. A strange light shone round about him—a mysterious light which illumined, yet obscured: a mysterious influence smote him to the ground. Bewildered, he heard a voice. From out the encircling light it came—not in anger, but in solemn calm: "Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" There is speech that falls on the ear and reaches no further. There is speech that catches the mind's attention, arousing intellectual interest and no more. The speech uttered without the gates of Damascus on that day of blessed omen for the world was the Word "more penetrating than a two-edged sword"; it sounded through the soul; was heard through the soul. He replied —not he who in the morning's sunlight had set forth from Jerusalem—another man, the man into whom the impassioned hater of the Christian name was already transformed, replied by asking in reverent fear: "Who are Thou —Lord?" Again came the voice of the Unseen: "I am Jesus, Whom thou dost persecute!" In that Word was no vehemence of physical strength to overawe—no dialectic art was employed to win approval of his intelligence for that which he had opposed. To the heart did the Lord speak—to the heart swept by storm of passion, and the thing was seen once more—nay, a thousand times more blessed thing was seen than when the same voice commanded the angry waves of the Galilean Sea—under the spell of that Word from the mouth of God the tempest of the heart was

appeased; the disorder of the erring will set right. Humbled, vanquished, converted—in trembling voice he gasped the query—be it engraved in ever-enduring bronze, and let children of men speak it to the Most High when they would express faith and hope and love and strong loyalty to Heaven's adorable will: "Lord! what wilt Thou have me to do?" When at the bidding of the Unseen he arose he was blind. And he who was to have ridden into Damascus in haughty state, with high credentials and strength of arms, to suppress the Church of Jesus Christ, entered it helpless as a child, led by his amazed companions! From hands he had gone to bind he received baptismal regeneration, and that conquest of Heaven's mercy became the grandest herald of Christian truth the world has ever seen! The proud cedar was broken—broken by the voice of the Lord!

Twelve of them spoke it to the nations of the earth—twelve men poor in all human resource. No arms bore they to enforce acceptance of their message; no human wisdom flashed from them; no natural eloquence was theirs to charm ear or fancy. Arrayed against them was all the world's greatness; the prestige of Grecian philosophy and Roman eloquence; the might of kings; the established position and prerogatives of paganism; the inclinations of corrupt human nature; besides all which the gates of Hell stood up as rock of adamant to oppose them. The Gospel they were bidden to preach contained in itself a giant obstacle to its acceptance by a fallen race; it presented a God suffering humiliation and defeat, while it delivered a law which ran counter to the strongest instincts of flesh and blood. That unwelcome law the twelve imposed on fallen mankind. They subjected the world to the empire of the Crucified One—empire such as proudest monarch of earth had never enjoyed. Solomon reigned, but only from Dan to Bersabee; Darius reigned over Babylonians and Parthians—no further; Pharaoh exercised kingly sway through Egypt only; Nabuchodonosor wielded proud sceptre—from India to Ethiopia his rule extended, and there found its limit. The name and kinghood of the Babe of Bethlehem and the Man of

Sorrows were spread everywhere; He was acknowledged as Teacher and Almighty Lord through all spheres! Justly did His great Apostle call the Word whereby that conquest was gained the "Power of God."

O Sacred Word of the Most High! Tolling bell to awake from sleep when passion's raging fire threatens the soul's life; trumpet blast to announce the approach of dangerous foe; flashing light that reveals the precipice over which one may plunge into eternal death! Sacred Word of God, advertiser to the human conscience of the revelation that is to guide and rule human life! Voice of the Lord speaking to the tempted one the word that brings holy fear and stimulating trust; to the cold, indifferent one the word that energises sluggish humanity and kindles love of the All-perfect God! Voice of the Lord reminding all of death and judgment, and warning that of death and judgment no man knows the day nor the hour! Voice of the Lord proclaiming to the unwise, "busied about many things," that "one thing is necessary"; re-echoing through all the centuries the challenging query of the Divine Master, to which no slave of passion, no votary of the earth's attractions, has yet given reply—"What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?"

THE WORD OF GOD.

Second Conference: Safeguard against Sensuality.

THE Psalmist, having sung that the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars, uttered second commendation of its saving efficiency—"The voice of the Lord divideth the flame of fire."

Among the passions there is one whose special character calls for emphasis, if not in express treatment from the pulpit and in spiritual books, at least in the solicitude of every Christian in whom there is healthy conscience. It is symbolised by the "flame of fire."

Fire possesses heat, and activity; it displays insatiable craving, seeking more, and again more, and ever more the more is given it. In Holy Scripture it is written of it: "Fire never saith—It is enough" (Prov. xxx. 16). Most men can recognise the tendency in the human heart which is inflamed as fire; which is of impetuous force; which, indulged one degree, asks further indulgence, and, gratified again, craves again with increased importunity. It is the dread sensual passion.

"The voice of the Lord divideth the flame." Look, with fancy's eye, on the material flame. See it when in fervid condition it leaps high above the burning mass. Would you diminish its intensity?—cast water on it. The water, diminishing the fire's intensity, divides the flame; for one great flame there are now two of less amplitude. Let the stream of water be shot forth again: it further diminishes the energy of the fire, and, in doing so, subdivides the flame, making of each reduced flame two flames of less magnitude. Let the process of dividing each flame be pursued; the process involves diminution of the fire in extent and activity, and, conversely, diminution of the

strength of the fire involves progressive division of each flame. Wherefore, to divide the flame of sensual passion is to reduce its heat and strength; to lessen its evil craving.

No need to tell wise Christians the supreme importance —the stern necessity—of effecting division of the dread flame. As this passion now manifests itself it is among the most striking reminders of the melancholy fall of man. It confirms the sad truth that mankind going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, going down from the Holy Sion of loving union with God, fell among robbers, by whom it was wounded and despoiled. Time was when the loving thought of mankind was not drawn away from the Creator by the sight of the material things He made. It was when the race was young, and its dwelling-place Eden's beauteous garden. The innocent pair recognised God in all good and fair things that surrounded them: all things were vouchers of His love. The touch of His creating hand—the hand of love—was fresh upon them. But the chief delight in that happy time was the nearness of the glorious Lord Himself. As He uttered gracious things to them His voice made melody for ear and soul. In that opening of human history the virgin heart of mankind looked to the beauty of God, and found its delight in God; the aspiration of the heart was all upward. Sin came; the body was gratified by forbidden sweet, and the sweetness of Paradise was soured to the sinner's taste. Fallen was man, surely, when he fled from God—when the Voice that had been delightful music became to his disordered sense a thing of terror!—"I heard Thy Voice in the midst of Paradise, and—I was afraid!" There was the doleful cry of sinful Adam. Ethereal delights had lost their attraction; the beauty of the Most High was veiled; therefore did the eyes of the foolish pair turn towards that which pleases sense, and their hearts conceive appetite for the enjoyments of sense. Besides, the will having chosen disobedience to the Lord, the viler elements in man assumed an attitude of rebellion against his higher faculties.

This debasement of ideal and aspiration is our sad inheritance. So settled a feature of humanity is now this downward tendency that the Apostle calls it a law—the law

of the members fighting against the law of the mind. Behold us, then, brethren. We have within us a thing our own—our very own—which has for fixed aim, aim asserted in a thousand temptations, the soul's eternal ruin.

What dread activity—what portentous strength—is there not in this unholy fire! This mysterious force which has been generated in fallen man's heart—what empire does it not assume over those who consent to becomes its victims! Empire over reason: impeding reason's exercise by the excitement of imagination and sense, it runs riot with its victim, while reason and judgment are hindered from ruling him. Reason, the noble and fair queen, despised and dethroned, a base-born handmaid is permitted to govern in her place. Empire over self-interest likewise. In the frenzy of sensuality, self-interest, wont to check unruly inclination, is disregarded. Interests of time are ignored; health, honour, trust of one's fellow-men—are renounced in the blinding folly that surrenders private good and the common weal under passion's alluring power. Self-interest of the higher kind — wise thought for eternal welfare—is extinguished; the fire of passion raging within the breast leads to forgetfulness of the fire to be enkindled by God's avenging justice, and not to be extinguished for ever. Thinking on this form of sinful folly, one recalls the day in the world's history, over memory of which darkest cloud shall ever lower, when before the Court of the Roman Governor of Judea insensate criminality sent forth the sacrilegious protestation: "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" The driven slave of passion makes his impious choice: not this immortal spirit; not its exalted life and beauty of grace—its glorious destiny—do I prize; but my vile body, made from the dust of the earth, and awaiting the corruption of the tomb!

The formidable power of the sensual passion led St Bernard to express the conviction that of the human population suffering in the eternal prison the majority are there for violation of the law of chastity. High authority is St Bernard, holy and learned Doctor of the Church. Perhaps in this one whose head no aureole of sanctity encircles may afford greater enlightenment, since not

among the friends of God is found best knowledge of the masterful power of this dread passion. Therefore, let there be testimony of other class. Not many years have gone since a man who held chief place in the Cabinet which guides the destinies of this great Empire declared in public address his conviction that that which is professed in the Catholic priesthood and in the religious institutions of the Church—obedience to the restraining law prescribed to clerics and religious—is an impossibility! That man spoke what is false, and, by the same word, spoke that which is true! He spoke truth, perhaps, for the religious sect of which he was a member. The religion he professed was misleading heresy. His heresy, leaving in his human nature the full strength of unholy passion, deprived him of the bread of angels, and the "wine that bringeth forth virgins." It taught him never to uplift heart and voice in the hour of passion's assault to beg the strengthening aid of the Immaculate Queen of Heaven. He saw the towering giant before whom fell the strength of Samson, the wisdom of Solomon, and the holiness of David; he saw not—nay, worse than that—the false creed wherewith he was cursed taught him to reject—the agencies of Heaven's grace wherewith God's true Church fortifies her children in the dread combat.

Worst of evil results that come from sensual indulgence is its interference with the grace of faith. "Wisdom shall not dwell in a body subject to sin," is the oracle of the Holy Spirit. And in the beginnings of the race outraged God declared: "My Spirit shall not remain in man because he is flesh." The corrupt heart has its vision dimmed, therefore sees not sacred truth. "The sensual man perceiveth not those things that are of the Spirit of God." In addition, the corrupt heart, relishing not the coercive law of the Gospel, lacks honest desire to see the unwelcome truth. In the history of the saintly Bishop, Francis of Sales, it is recorded that he held religious controversy with Beza, a noted Calvinist leader. A stage was reached in the discussion at which it was clear to the saint that Beza had no further intellectual ground for adhering to the heretical sect. He had said his last word of even pretended

reply to Catholic argument. The holy Bishop, perplexed, sought explanation of his persistence in clinging to a religion proved to him to be false. Explanation came on a certain day when, as the two held converse in the heretic's house, a woman passed through a corridor in sight of them. She dwelt under Beza's roof. "There," confessed the wretched man, "there goes the only argument that keeps me from entering the Catholic Church!" Yes—to bend the neck under the yoke, to put on bit and bridle, is repellent to the heart round which have been coiled the silken cords of love of self, and love of self is largely love of that which pleases the bodily sense.

Measure, brethren, in your Christian calculation, the vast world of souls torn from the bosom of the true Church by the English Reformation. That vast world enlarges itself in ever-widening circles as generations succeed one another. Contemplating that mass of spiritual tragedy, remember that the point whereon as foundation it all rests is the strength of unchaste passion in one bad man. It makes one think of Satan when he took the Holy Lord to the mountain-top, and, showing Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, said: "All these will I give Thee, if, falling down, Thou wilt adore me!" England's unclean monarch played a rôle parallel to that of his evil genius and master. The actual fact was as though he exhibited before the Church of God in the person of her Supreme Head his great Empire, and the greater Empire into which it was to develop—England's growing and multiplying Colonies in all the seas—the Empire whereon the sun never sets, and said: All these shall be thine—shall be Catholic—shall be striking enhancement of thy greatness and power, if, falling down from thy lofty place as custodian of this cruel gospel of Christ, thou wilt do me the homage of tolerating my lustful whims. In that portentous crisis God's holy Church stood for God's holy law, leaving to Churches made by man accommodation to man's wicked caprice: the wretched slave of passion, finding the Christian yoke unbearable, renounced the faith whereby alone he could attain to eternal life.

Measure, in the same Christian calculation, the spiritual mischief wrought in robbing men of faith, and impeding men's embrace of faith, by those who make intellectual war against the Church of God: it bears the name of conflict between science and religion. Think not, brethren, that it is all intellectual war; that the learned men, and the men who would be learned, and the men who would be deemed learned, discharge their shafts against the Church merely because their minds hold as false what she teaches to be Divine truth. No, no! There are some of whom that may be said; but the system, the active hostility to the Church by elements which began to coalesce in the eighteenth century, and are now a great army arrayed against her—though the arms men see in their hands are intellectual activities, books, lectures, and so forth—the real force which sounded the trumpet blast that banded them together, placed arms in their hands, set them in serried ranks, and sent them forth against the Church of Rome, was the conviction that she is the natural enemy—or, shall I rather say? the supernatural enemy—of fallen man's corrupt nature. Think the same, brethren, of the hatred of the Church, and the plots hatched against her, and the persecuting blows whereby she has been smitten in our day by certain Governments of Europe. They hate her. Why? She teaches the Gospel; she proclaims the Gospel; she impresses the Gospel. To corrupt nature that Gospel is a "hard saying." They ask with the coward disciples of old: "Who can hear it?" In all suppositions the Gospel is a "hard saying"; but if the Catholic Church would act, or abstain from acting, as do other Churches that call themselves Christian; if she would allow the Gospel law of restraint to lie, quiet and unassertive, on the page of a book, we could, in placid spirit, take that book to church, when it pleased us to go to church; we could read the soft texts, dear to the enervating falsehood of heresy; we could read that Protestant favourite, John iii. 16; we could read again and again the nice passages in the Sermon on the Mount, and the nature within us would feel no unpleasant restraint or goading. But a Church which takes God's appointment of her seriously—God's appoint-

ment of her as a teacher of religion in His name—God's declaration that He would guide her teaching; a Church which authoritatively presses the law on every Christian conscience—runs counter to the dearest ambitions of our fallen nature; such a Church fallen nature bids us hate; she is the enemy, and as enemy shall we treat her. Truth is, brethren—take away from the statute book the Sixth Commandment—and the Seventh—or, leaving both lie on the statute book, take away the strong executive power of the Church, which bravely impresses them in God's name on fallen man, and you take away both the conflict between science and religion, and the persecution of the Church by the powers of the world. The first Catholic slaves of corrupt nature nailed to a cross, and the Church that would impress His unwelcome law they would deal with in like fashion.

Share in that disposition may come to every child of the Church through infection by the sensual spirit. There are members of the fold in whom we perceive on the surface failure in religious practice; language which denotes disimprovement in Catholic tone; bearing that indicates blunting of the edge of faith. Disregard of the Church's teaching authority is heard, or sinister justification of false religion, or un-Catholic pleading for liberty of thought on sacred matters. Beneath this unhealthy attitude of mind and heart in many an instance is enslavement to the unclean passion, which on one side darkens the mind, and on the other creates rebellious thought and speech against the eternal Gospel and the authority that would enforce it.

"The voice of the Lord divides the flame." In the first place, mark what befalls men who withdraw themselves from the influence of the Divine Word—who hear it not, read it not! There is ever a taking in of suggestion by the mind, whether for good or ill. There is, besides, some activity of the heart at all times of responsible life. We are ever open to moral influences; what we have heard or read —principles we have formed or inherited—tend, through all times of reason's use, to move us towards a line of action deserving praise or blame. They in whose hearts the voice from above sounds not must hear the voice from below—

the voice of fallen nature—the voice of passion inviting, urging to evil. To one side or the other the pendulum of the heart swings. In him who never, or scarce ever, hears the preacher's voice, nor supplies the want by reflection on the Word of God set forth on page of holy book, there is lack of the light of the spirit; waning of the light reaches ere long to dark night of the soul, and dark night is the time for the marauder and burglar to go about on their mission of evil. That man is easy prey to his enemies.

On Sunday last we were reminded that of all evil passions the main spring is disordered love of self. They who take in regular supply of food of the Divine Word are not permitted to forget the place assigned to self, the treatment prescribed for self, in the religion to which it is our sacred privilege to belong. "In the head of the book it is written"—all who would worthily bear the Christian name must deny self, sharing in this the cross of Christianity's Divine Founder. About to build His Church, He set as the stone that would sustain its entire moral system the denial of self. Having reared the stately edifice, He inscribed over its portal the legend that proclaims self-denial as the great condition of genuine Christianity; and high above its towers and battlements He floated the principle of self-denial as the standard beneath which all His true followers should march. This mind of the Divine Master, proclaimed to us from the Christian pulpit, tends to "divide the flame" in them who reverently hear it, since, according to the interpretation of self-denial made by the average heart of humanity, it means most directly and markedly combat against the dangerous tendencies which arise from the flesh. In that combat man encounters first and most frequently the dread foe, self, which Christianity's fundamental law bids him resist and overcome.

The Divine Leader's illustrious lieutenant, St Paul, failed not in emphatic teaching of the same truth. Well did he know the power and insistence of the domestic enemy; the strength of the flame that rages—threatens, at least, to rage—in fallen humanity for the destruction of the soul's

life. Knowing it, and loving all souls of men, he flung out the salutary warning that holds in restraint all who give it heed—"If you live according to the flesh—you shall die!" The wages of surrender to the sensual appetite is death, loss of God's friendship, the soul's life; after which ensues the eternal death, which is eternal pain from God's avenging justice. "But, if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live!" The Apostle delivered the word that was to transpierce with saving fear him who would listen to the seductive invitation of the evil passion; he delivered, likewise, the word that stimulates every tempted one to the resistance, prompt and brave, that smashes the power of this evil thing: life—life now by possession of God's beauteous grace, and the entrancing good, life for ever, is for them who are victors in the struggle.

By other form of speech, and it is of distinctive interest, did the Lord's great preacher convey the same lesson. Full revelation of the Christian religion was accorded to the wonderful Apostle. Full, strong and clear grasp of its spirit was in his richly illumined mind and sanctified heart. Seeing the Christian ideal—seeing the tendency and way of the corrupt flesh—he saw the relation of emphatic opposition between them. Bound by law of his Apostolic vocation to educate the faithful unto Christian thought, Christian feeling, and Christian bearing, he satisfied notable requirement of his conscience by telling them: "They that are Christ's have——" What, brethren, did St Paul say of them that are of Christ? That they contradict the desires of the flesh? That they control its dangerous tendencies? Not this was his commendation of them; hear the glorious herald of saving truth: "They that are Christ's have *crucified* the flesh, with its vices and concupiscences!" That oracle of the great preacher of the infant Church brings to mind counsel spoken by another eminent herald of the Word raised up by Heaven's Providence a thousand years later. St Bernard contemplated a man strongly moved to forfeit his soul's life and eternal destiny by evil instinct of the flesh, and thus addressed him: "If you think rightly you shall say with

me of that wicked enemy: 'He is guilty of death! Let him be crucified!'"

St Paul told the policy pursued towards the flesh by them "that are Christ's." Of Christ, in truest sense, were the saints. Not least part of the preaching of the Word whereby the Church seeks our spiritual weal is the expounding of their histories. The stories of the saints are enlightenment and stimulus for all who would wage the spiritual combat, for their lives are the Gospel translated into practice by men and women of our own flesh and blood. We feast the saint who from the throne of the Fisherman ruled the Christian world, and the saint whose rôle was cooking of humble fare in monastery kitchen; we feast the bold missioner who, through a thousand perils from tropical heat or biting northern blasts, or the fierce cruelty of savage tribes, preached to the heathen the Word of Life; we feast likewise the mother of the Christian household, who piled up grace for herself, and glory for God, by fidelity in simple duties. The Church's calendar has them of all sorts, of all nations, of all social conditions, of all varieties of occupation. But through the varied texture of character, of position, of occupation, of manner of life and death in God's holy servants, there runs one thread easily recognisable by all who glance at their histories. Hatred of self was in them, and that hatred of self was manifested in marked fashion by their being ever armed against the wiles and assaults of the flesh. So stern was the normal attitude of the saints towards the body, such the resolute hardness of treatment they dealt out to it, that readers not a few find it difficult to believe the startling mortifications narrated of them, whilst others incline to judge scarcely praiseworthy their disregard of what seems to be the body's rational well-being. But did one of lower grade of thought and feeling whisper to canonised hero of the Church remonstrance for harsh dealing with the body, he would have received the reply spoken by Ignatius of Antioch to those whose human kindness would have him fly the peril of martyrdom: "Excuse me; I know what is good for me!" Illumined and exalted by the plenteous grace their generous service had won, the saints saw, better

than the common Christian sees, the immense difference between time and eternity; they thought on the "great price" paid by the Son of God for the human soul; they knew that countless multitudes were howling vain regrets in the eternal prison for the folly of obedience to carnal passion. In every faintest suggestion of wrong that came from the flesh they recognised invitation to enter on the way that leads to eternal perdition; therefore, did they think the thought, and adopt the attitude, of St Bernard, already told, who, casting frown of holy indignation at the evil genius that sends forth his sinister proposal from the body, cried out: "He is guilty of death—let him be crucified!" For all their hate and horror of the foul passion, they lived ever in fear of surprise and defeat from its insidious attacks. Not all his hundred years of life—not all his long seclusion in the desert, with daily curbing of the natural man—gave to Antony the Hermit such assurance as kept him from unceasing vigilance and frequent strong pleading for God's protecting grace against the dread foe. And he who walked on the holy mountains of union with God, and was aflame with Divine love, great St Philip Neri, sent up each morning the fervid appeal to Heaven: "Lord, keep Thy hand this day on Philip; else Philip will surely betray Thee." But let us have St Paul once again. St Paul confessed the attitude he assumed as follower of the Crucified Master, and, Christian philosopher that he was, gave the all-sufficing reason for the same. He is the man who, rapt to the third Heaven though he had been, flooded with the gifts of the Divine Spirit, wrote to the Corinthians: "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway!"

Dearest brethren, let us not lag too far behind the saints. Let the Holy Word which for them divided the flame of fire effect like blessing in us. The enemy they all feared and made provision against encounters each one of us; he is within our very breasts. To everyone in this assembly there has been given a soul as precious as that of any amongst God's blessed ones. For precious jewel,

though from the bowels of the earth has it come, and is destined merely to glitter in kingly coronet, they make a casket, that thief may not steal it, nor rude touch sully its beauteous lustre. For his soul, breathed forth by God, drawn from the bleeding side of the Divine Redeemer, and destined to shine with never-fading splendour in Heaven, let every man set guard. By refined conscientiousness in the matter of Christian chastity, let him stand, so to say; by his own soul, as angel with flaming sword, that no wanton glance of the eye, no evil suggestion falling on the ear, no form of amusement, no seductive reading, no circumstances connected with his occupation, no cherished companionship may lead to forfeiture of the precious jewel of grace in the immortal soul. Be we like the saints of God in this—when from corrupt nature inclinings are detected which contain peril for the soul's weal, let us, in the robust spirit of the Gospel, seize on those carnal tendencies, cast them contemptuously on the ground, that, standing on their dishonoured ruins, we may proclaim the gladsome victory of Heaven's grace.

THE WORD OF GOD.

Third Conference: Remedy for the "Desert" Soul.

NEXT salutary efficacy attributed by the royal prophet to the voice of the Lord is that it "shaketh the desert." The desert in material sense is the place where none of the charm of the vegetable kingdom is seen. In the desert no smiling corn bends beneath the summer breeze; no beauteous flowers scent the vale; no majestic trees lift high in air their giant trunks, and spread their lordly branches for grateful shade; over the desert the lark rings not his merry note to the sky, nor does the air resound at tranquil eve with the nightingale's enchanting lay: nor ear nor eye finds aught to please; all is blank desolation.

There are souls like that. The spiritual world has a sowing of seed, a growth, a blossoming, and fruit-bearing. Desert is the life in which there is no growth; the life that shows no flowers of virtue, no fruit of good works; the life that lacks spiritual activity. Of two classes of this evil thing one comprises those who fail in bounden good. These are of the category designated "sinners," with whom it is not proposed to deal. Your thought is invited, brethren, to men who do not lead bad lives, as that characterisation is generally understood; who are not banned by their Christian neighbours under a form of popular excommunication. One can but say of them—to fine Christian sensitiveness a sad thing to say of them—that they are devoid of becoming interest in the great concern of eternity. In their lives is no spontaneity in prayer and use of Sacraments; never spiritual book taken in hand to read; dealings with God, if done, are done with coldness and under constraint; *the heart is not in them*; there is no cordiality with the Heavenly Father. When,

at expiry of every decennial period, the officers of the law collect material for constructing the Census report, the men I describe are tabulated under the head of "Roman Catholics"; they stand in the Church's ranks when its members are reviewed in official way; they attend public meetings for some Catholic purpose; are named and cheered and voted for as the Catholic candidates when places are to be filled on administrative or legislative bodies; they give of their money to build a temple of religion, and do other services in what may be called the material programme of Catholic life. But, in their persons—in their ordinary demeanour—Catholicity as a warming, stimulating, exalting influence has no place. The lamp of faith shines feebly within them; the fire of Divine love—shall I say—burns dimly? My dear brethren, burning fire one cannot detect in them at all. Every Christian has learned to pray to the Father of all—"Thy Kingdom come!" and the catechism taught that by that petition we ask that God may reign in our hearts and lives during this mortal life. In those who represent the desert there is no desire that God should reign; the influence they allow Him in their lives is meagre; they live, to a large degree, outside the range of supernatural truth, scarce ever uplifting thought to supernatural ideals, or responding to supernatural influences.

This harmful disposition, like many other harmful things, feeds on itself. Hence the sad development of spiritual mischief that takes place in the class we are considering. Because the great Lord received meagre recognition yesterday, He receives less to-day, and will to-morrow receive still less. With the passing of each graceless day there is continual lowering of spiritual temperature; there is further drying up of the sap that would produce spiritual activity; there is further withdrawal from God. The desert soul makes profession of accepting the code of Divine laws, but the law which has been declared on august authority to be "first and greatest"—the law which commands love of God with the whole heart and soul, with the whole mind and strength—this wretched man seems to ignore. One looks in vain for sign that any stirring of his heart is

produced by love for the Most High: the activity of his thinking faculty is not for God; the interest that moves, and sometimes excites him, is never for the cause of God; no relish is felt by him for the things of God; the conversation of his choice is never on the things of God. Reading the world's daily history in the public Press, he has no power of mind, scarce even visual sense of body, to detect God's side of the occurrences there narrated. The increase in the number of "cases" listed for trial at the Court of Divine Justice as a result of new means of rapid locomotion; the increase in the number of murders and suicides—things which compel solemn thought and feeling in men whose faculty of Christian sensitiveness is well adjusted—have no interest for him beyond that which is of mere natural life. It has been said that he never takes for reading books on pious subject; not even newspaper will be read if its chief content be the happenings that belong immediately to the cause of God. Priests of the Most High devise fresh items in the programme of ministrations designed to promote the eternal good of the Christian community; missions and retreats are announced; Lenten or Advent course of sermons is instituted: the man whom the saddening description of the desert fits uses not these agencies of grace, first, because the dull spirit within him relishes not things which have only spiritual interest, and, besides, for the anterior reason that the knowledge that such things are being done at all reaches not to the clouded, un-Catholic region wherein he dwells.

In some spiritual deserts there are green spots, small, few and far apart, while over the vast remaining space is the drear barrenness of the desert. One class restricts the Almighty as to time. They give Him one day of the seven which make the week. One day, did I say? One hour! Half an hour; the time that runs out during the celebration of one Mass. If there be added brief morning and night prayer, then is the green space of the dimension of less than one out of the hundred and sixty-eight hours that make the week.

A second class restricts the Almighty as to place. Let God be acknowledged in the Church—is their implied

profession. In the Temple built and blessed for public Divine service, in monasteries and convents, He should be object of man's thought, and receive honour. Without those sacred walls: in the public way, in the workshop, in the family circle, in the public assembly, in the railway carriage, in the House of Parliament, in the royal palace, on the fair green, on the course where horses compete in the race—there is no God, or God is as though He were not; there needs to be no thought of God, no sense of God, in individual or collective man!

Again, a large portion of mankind seeks to confine the Great Lord to those concerns which are directly and formally spiritual. In Masses, prayers, Sacraments, and sermon-hearing let the Creator have place; not in human interests and activities! Men may, forsooth, enter into business calculations, weave their commercial schemes, arrange their bargains, buy and sell, with no remembrance that the Just Judge stands by claiming right of interference. They may seek amusement in various ways, and in their amusements the Supreme Lord is to have no recognition. They may purchase reading matter at railroad book-stall, or select it in public library, or borrow it from friends—and the Most High is to have no voice as to the lawfulness or propriety of their reading. They may enter the polling booth on election day, and cast their votes under the guidance of considerations wherein conscience, God's agent, has no interfering right—wherein God's sacred interests are ignored. One sense there is in which those classes of men admit the Lord into every circumstance of life: He is welcome in every time and place and concern as Universal Caterer; they are willing to feed on the daily bread His bounty supplies, to breathe the life-giving air that comes from his Fatherly hand, and enjoy the cheering sunshine He has made. But sluggish nature and the pagan spirit stand as guard over those unwise men to avert such obtrusion of the Divine claims as would disturb their peace.

Sad spectacle the desert soul makes! Sad that son of the Church, child of the Heavenly Father, uplifted to supernatural life by baptism, charged with Pentecostal

light and strength on the day of his confirmation, fed many times in past years with the Body and Blood of the Divine Redeemer, placed in tender infancy under the care of the great Mother of God, enlightened by the stimulating religious knowledge possessed by children of the true Church, and for years, perhaps, blessed by her august Sacraments—destined for unending bliss in the loving possession of God—sad, indeed, that such a one should feel, speak and live as though, not merely as to carnal body, but as to soul likewise, he had sprung from vile earth, and for mere purpose of earth and time had been created! Especially sad when it is head of a Christian household this unholy spirit has invaded. He dwells under the same roof with fervent wife and children; he is far, far removed from them in heart and spirit. They bask in the warm sunshine of a favoured clime; he is in the cold desert. They feed on rich food and plenteous fruit of delicious taste; he is content with husks of the emptiness of earth. Balmy air from zephyrs of Heaven blows sweet refreshment to them, and angel voices sing to them in many a visit to the Tabernacle and Benediction of the Adorable Sacrament and Confraternity meeting; while for him, since he has declined the invitation to "taste and see that the Lord is sweet," and earthly enjoyments quickly lose such savour as he finds in them, life becomes cold, dull and gloomy, its inevitable clouds unrelieved by gleams from the unseen world. And eternity? He who abides long in the spiritual desert enters in most instances, sooner or later, into the category of sinners. What, then, of his eternity? While earthly life endures he grieves at separation from the loved ones of his household. Parting with them for long makes sorrow, and brings tears. If, through neglect of means of grace, he shall lose the friendship of God, if he shall die unrepentant, what feeling shall be his when, on the doomsday, the angel of the Most High, who is to separate the wheat from the chaff, shall separate the genuine religion of his wife and children from the emptiness of his life? What feeling his when, as they with whom he sat round the festive board on many a Christmas night shall ride up the shining clouds to their

eternal Home, the tragic truth shall pierce his brain and heart that he shall see them—never more!

It will be well if we study the causes of the harmful state of soul we are considering. That sterile condition is produced, naturally, by the law of spiritual gravitation; the same is at the root of all forms of evil in the soul. Material bodies, unless elevating or sustaining force counteract the downward tendency, fall to the ground. By parallel law souls of Adam's race tend downwards. They who rise and bound and fly, as do servants of God of various degrees of excellence, do so by the aid of sustaining, propelling grace. The desert soul values not Divine grace; seeks it not, and, in God's ordinary dispensation, receives it not. His evil state involves neglect of the very thing which would cure him, and thus the evil feeds on itself. There is other cause and explanation of the same sad state. The God Whom we are called on to serve, All-powerful and All-perfect though He is, is invisible. None living in the trial time of earth has ever seen Him. Since reason's use began we have sounded His name thousands of times; thousands of times we have heard it sounded; the entire system of the Church's ministrations asserts Him; we have even spoken to Him. But God no man in the flesh has seen. Then the light, whereon, practically speaking, man depends for knowledge of Him, faith, though light, is an obscure light. Besides, though it is all a gift of God, and no man's mental striving can produce the vision of things we call faith, yet for acceptance of it and for effective use of it, there is needed a good disposition in man's will. St Francis saw things of the other world with exceptionally clear vision; that was because holiness gave splendid supernatural power to his will, and the splendidly disposed will, using faith, had in faith a clear vision. To him whose faith is not maintained in good condition by regular bestowal of Heaven's grace, drawn down upon him by a life that is pleasing to the Most High, the vision of supernatural things becomes dim, and with advance of the days, more dim, so that God, the invisible, grows, so to speak, more and more invisible. The Supreme Being gradually wanes from the mental view of

such a man; love for God cools, almost to freezing point; interest in God languishes; stimulus to activity in the cause of God is wanting; the soul and life exhibit the melancholy desolation of the desert. Place him in a thoroughly non-Catholic country, or in a thoroughly non-Catholic educational centre, or in the midst of non-Catholic associations, and there may come for this one such waning of God from the mind that he would venture on the daring immorality of denying God's very existence! That feat is perpetrated when he becomes a fool. Fool is he whom the light of reason guides not: fool, in the spiritual sense, is he whom the light of faith guides not, and "the fool hath said in his heart—'There is no God!'"

There is yet another cause of the drear emptiness of soul we call the desert. Our lot, brethren, is cast in a world of sense. Things we touch, hear, see, eat, and drink are present to us with vivid actuality. Things of earth and sense bid fair to monopolise thought and interest. Their nearness to us—the facility with which they engage attention—is apt to lend them more than their due share of importance for some minds, and thus delusion is caused. The delusive character of material things casts a spell on not a few men; enjoyment that is altogether of here below makes so loud a noise in their ears as silences the whisperings of the Divine Spirit when He invites to the high and rich and fair things of which faith tells. Great though God is, and transcendently important the interest associated with Him, this world gains easy advantage over Him in the minds and hearts of many men. This world of sense—be it repeated—is by our side. It decks itself out like a fair charmer; with rich and rare gems and various pigments does it adorn itself to draw unto itself men's wistful gaze and captivate them. Through many a generation did this fair charmer captivate men of higher condition by gay social assemblies and feasting; in our generation she has laid her spell on all ranks by the delirious excitement of the gambling table and of the race-course. Before the parade of her charms the things of God—the shadowy things of the other world—make but poor show! The flesh-pots of Egypt are

what many men yearn for: they have no relish for the manna sent down from Heaven.

"The voice of the Lord shaketh the desert!" "Shaketh the desert"—what does the phrase mean? Even in the desert—to return to its material significance—there are, doubtless, some germs of life. One can fancy a giant power grasping the desert soil and shaking the sterile mass so that some stirring of life is felt, and there shoots up from the long barren plain a green blade to gratify the expectant gaze of the husbandman. For the spiritual desert, the cold, listless Christian, there is a power that can seize, and, with preternatural energy, shake the moral being, so as to stir the deep-buried germs of good in the soul, and arouse the Christianity that has gone to sleep. The Word of God can galvanise the inert mass of the sluggish man, producing from the soil that lay severely barren the refreshing growth of a pious life. Be this thought set forth at first—the disposition which makes the desert spirit is a bondage; God's Word delivers the truth, and the truth sets free, according to the Master's pledge.

Fully, variously, beautifully, does the Holy Word display the saving power that shakes the desert. The strong threat which suggests salutary fear; the pungent rebuke which shames the thankless sluggard; the revelation of Divine love to inflame the cold heart; the trumpet call to awaken the sleeping energies and brace the nervous system of man's soul; the proclamation of the "first and greatest commandment"—all this and more is in the Lord's Sacred Word.

Many are the arrows discharged by the Spirit of God against the man who embodies in his person the melancholy idea of the desert. It should suffice to bring out from the Sacred Page the oracle of the Divine Master—"Seek ye first the Kingdom and His justice!" If there be canvassing of the thought of man's mind, of the interest of man's heart, of the aiming of man's energies, then preferential place is here commanded by Eternal Truth for the supreme concern of the Kingdom of God, and the adorning one's soul with the justice of God. So great is

this concern that it is to be first in the Christian's thought and heart, not merely in the sense that other interests take their place after it, but in the sense that the towering height of it is to fling a shadow over all a man's life; through work-day and feast-day, in business-time and in play-time, there is to be an influence on him that comes from his sense of the transcendent importance of God's holy service.

Lest that word of the Lord should not fully arouse the sluggard, there is a message from the Most High revealing to mankind in the plainest form of speech the solemn issue which confronts all—unending happiness or unending pain! We can find the listless sluggard now enjoying by his fireside the ease he loves, or tasting such pleasure as perishable things afford him; if friends would find him after bewildering cycles of centuries shall have gone, they must seek him on one of the thrones in Heaven or in one of the dungeons of nether Hell! Fool, indeed, is he whom that revelation arouses not to action for the soul's security; enhancement of his folly is witnessed when the voice of the Lord announces the attitude which alone fits man for the crown of eternal bliss—"The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away!" According to human sense of equity, only they that labour are given wage; by rule of Divine justice, only they that labour for it are admitted to the place of everlasting bliss.

Inconceivably immoral folly to the judgment of the All-wise and All-holy God must the conduct of the desert Christian be, seeing that to the thought of mortal man of average rectitude of conscience it is such manifest folly and immoral folly. This inert son of the Church does not purpose his soul's eternal loss. At the root of the sort of peace he enjoys is subcurrent of hope of Heaven. Heaven —place of never-ending happiness! That happiness to be derived from only one source! Source of Heaven's happiness—the sight of God! joyful admiration for God! loving gaze on God! ravishing joy for union with God!—and naught save this—for ever! What taste for God is in this foolish one? How can Heaven be Heaven —for him—if there be no enjoyment there except God?

Eternity with only God! Why, the twenty-five minutes of Sunday's Mass is long, and penitential time for him to spend with God. He bears with it until the desert soul glides into the category of sinful souls by casting off religious practice. The Sunday's Mass, plus hearing the priest announce the Word of God, he feels he cannot tolerate! And this dupe of the evil diplomacy of fallen nature hopes for an eternal good which consists in naught but the feasting of the human heart on God! Let him see to it that the hope he cherishes be the hope which is a Christian virtue, the hope which urges to service of the Most High and earnest care for the immortal soul. Let him give reverent heed to the word of St Paul, which shames the desert soul and confounds every heretic who proclaims the mischievous falsehood that the sacrifice offered by the world's Redeemer dispenses His followers from the spiritual activity that would win the eternal crown—"In fear and trembling work out your salvation."

Sacred Scripture, rich source whence they draw who speak the Divine Word to the faithful, contains a striking story which should bring salutary confusion on all who rob the great Lord of honour, and imperil their spiritual weal, by yielding to the cold spirit that produces the sad picture we have been studying. Three sons of Israel, refusing to adore the golden statue set up by Nabuchodonosor, King of Babylon, were cast at the impious monarch's command into a fiery furnace. Destructive flames raged round about them; fire of greater power—red-hot love of God—burned within their breasts. Walking through the great sheets of flame, their thought was on God; their hearts' activity was yearning that from their dread experience glory should result to God. Their language—was it cry of pain? No! Let all who narrow the claims of the Most High hear it and be ashamed, and let every friend of God rejoice and render Him warmer love and higher service. Illumined by magnificent faith, through creation's vast domain swept the glance of the three heroes, and all the works of the Most High they called on to bless Him. "Ye angels of God, all ye spirits

of God, praise and bless Him for ever! Ye heavens, and waters that are above the heavens; sun, moon, and stars, praise and exalt Him for ever! Every shower and dew, cold and heat, ice and snow, nights and days "—no limiting here of the claims of the Divine Majesty—"light and darkness—bless the Lord! Lightnings and clouds—bless the Lord! Ye mountains and hills; all things that bud forth from the earth; ye fountains, rivers, and seas; ye whales and all that move in the waters of the sea; fowls of the air, beasts and cattle—ye sons of men—praise and exalt Him above all for ever!" From that Babylonian furnace flames broke forth which burned unto death the bodies of the Chaldean servants that stood near. From that same Babylonian furnace, brethren, let a flame come forth to set our hearts on fire with love for the all-glorious God. By that soaring canticle of the brave martyrs let the desert be shaken; let it tell to our hearts, at least—and let our hearts never forget the lesson—that man, all man, all that is in man—all being—is from God, and that when His imperial voice called creation forth from nothing, and sent its countless items to sail down the stream of time, on every great thing, and on every least thing, He set His seal, marking them as His, and proclaiming that all creation should give testimony to the proprietorship and sovereignty of Him Who made it.

THE WORD OF GOD.

Fourth Conference: Cure of Cowardice.

LAST eulogy uttered by the Psalmist of the "Voice of the Lord"—the Divine Word—is that it "prepareth the stags." What meaning pertinent to our spiritual interest underlies this "preparing of the stags"? See the stag in his native element. Behold him calmly browsing on the green sward. A sound falls on his ear; straightway he stands erect, and listens with eager intent. Again he hears the sound—now more clearly, and all his graceful form quivers with apprehension of danger. Nearer comes the sound which has caused his fear; he recognises the yelping of the hounds and the blast of the huntsman's horn. Bounding from his place of rest, he shoots across the plain, rushing with the swiftness of the wind; rapidly mounts the uplands; quickly gathering his strong and lithe limbs, he overleaps high fences and walls, dashes through the dense thicket; all to escape the fate he fears from his pursuing enemies.

The stag symbolises timidity. The timidity which prejudices the soul's weal, or the courage which the soul needs is, therefore, the theme for which I would canvass your thought to-day.

That the saving of a soul calls for courage needs no proving. It is evident to all of average experience of life, and it is abundantly attested by all who teach the art and science of salvation. A "warfare" the service of God has been styled. He who undertakes the profession of waging war needs courage—courage to assume the rôle, courage to fight, courage to gain victory. Hence, amongst the virtues the Christian is taught to strive for fortitude is one, and one holding important place. It is listed with the cardinal

virtues. When light of reason dawned upon us, and with reason's use responsibility commenced, formal announcement was made to us of the opening of the spiritual combat, and solemn preparation of our young souls was made therefor, by the anointing hand of the Church's Prelate on the day of our Confirmation. The gentle stroke on the cheek done by the Bishop was intimation that blows threatening the soul's life would be aimed at us during the struggle time then ushered in, and that among the seven gifts of the Spirit of God then invoked upon was the fortitude that would brace the spirit to do a faithful soldier's part in the struggle.

Two chief departments of the soul's concern there are in which courage is needed, since two classes of cowardice —one had better say, two stages whereat cowardice displays itself—are to be noted in moral history. There is a cowardice that leads to sin, and a cowardice that keeps one in sin. To meet this twofold spiritual danger there is a courage that avoids sin, and a courage that upraises from sin.

The baptised child, not yet gifted with reason's use, avoids sin as matter of course, and, dying in innocence, attains to Heaven as to an inheritance. Adult man, who does not attain to Heaven as to an inheritance, but as to a crown—the reward of victorious combating—avoids sin only by the prevailing of his faithful will against many and strong enemies. None save those in whom there is criminal lack of concern for the paramount interest of eternal life require to be assured of this; the experience of mankind has shown it with forcible clearness. Besides, the Holy Spirit, through the wise man, gave intimation of the same: "Son, when thou comest to the service of God . . . prepare thy soul for temptation" (Ecclus. ii. 1). Temptation in human life—how frequent! how strong! For resistance—resistance that is maintained victoriously through all attacks—what strong combat is demanded! For that strong, victorious combat, what courage! There is the dread attractiveness of sin to fallen man. Were there not this, sin were never done, at least by one whom faith enlightens and in whom there is becoming recognition

of religious ideals. We do not sin for the purpose of offending God. We do not sin in order to do harm to our souls. By him who knows the forbidden character and the evil consequences of it, sin is done because man's heart is borne towards it by the movement of temptation, and the strong sinward movement is from the power of tempting influences. That power of the tempting influences is the power of apostate angels taken together with the power of the great passions of the human breast to which we have already given thought. So that, heroes, in the truest and highest sense, are not they who march in big numbers and serried ranks, bugles sounding and colours flying, to the bloody field of glory, but they who, in simple conditions of life, engaged at common work of men, or walking the public way, or seated by the fireside, pressed by strong temptation, Satan striking from without, and their own hearts craving for the forbidden thing from within, stand erect in loyalty to God and the soul, and, striking back against all those strong foes, gain the victory of grace.

Courage is needed likewise for the withholding oneself from the attractive danger of wrongdoing. The dangerous occasion entices; did it not entice there were no danger. The way that leads to sin is overlaid with soft carpet, and decked in beauteous colours; it is a flowery path. To the well-meaning but weak man who, having been pardoned much sinful gratification of appetite by strong drink, is solicitous for perseverence in right, what house in all the town so bright—what house promises such comfort—as the house where they distribute the dangerous thing he has forsworn? To the growing girl entering on womanhood, if nature be permitted to guide her thought and taste, how much more agreeable the perilous freedom of the night-walker than the straitened life of her sister who chooses the gloomy way of home retirement at night, and the family rosary, the earnest night prayer, and timely retiring to rest? As to reading—an occupation wherein abundant crop of spiritual evil and spiritual good is sown—for many, probably for the great majority, the entertaining power of the book is in direct proportion to the risk it involves for one's moral health, or for that which is of

deeper and higher importance, one's soundness of faith and Catholic tone of thought and speech and feeling. Those poisonous pills are gilded; delightful narcotic is breathed while men tread the way that leads to impairment of the soul's health. The famous European centre of gambling, of the gambling that despoils men of money, use of reason, the body's life, and eternal happiness, is among the fairest spots in all the earth. The innocent flowers whose bosoms the sun has painted with bewitching loveliness are there, and graceful palms betokening the genial clime which no rude storms invade; sheltered by the towering Alps from behind, and smiled on by the calm blue of the Mediterranean before it, stands the fairy-like palace, in gilded beauty, sending forth to the weak children of Adam who flit round the dangerous light the message of alluring strains of music from the chosen artists of the world, which, like the fabled invitation of the spider to the fly, is designed to draw them within the meshes of the machine that is to work their ruin. The associations most perilous for the soul's innocence are often most in accord with natural feelings; hence unwise Christians not rarely give strongest testimony to the peril of evil associations and the necessity of shunning them by the earnestness wherewith they plead for permission to go into them. When this agent of the Evil One, this subordinate demon, invites us to do the act, enter on the way, read the book, enjoy the companionship which is not sin, but which conscience recognises for assured danger of sin, it is only the courageous soul that lends dutiful ear to the voice of conscience, and by its loyal attitude makes the protestation: I will not do sin; nor will I do that which is like to lead to sin.

Another department of morals wherein is interesting call for courage is the performance of duty. The misery of our fallen state includes disinclination to work. There is especial disinclination to the work which conscience commands, if *only* conscience commands. If it be not in accord with nature's state or nature's desires at the particular moment, naught but the strong voice of conscience secures the doing of it, and the man who utters command to himself by strong voice of conscience is the man of

courage. Illustration of the good, and of the evil, in this important matter may be found in almost every condition of life. The teacher in educational establishment, the tradesman, the factory hand, workers of all kinds, when either chronic spirit of laziness or passing fit tempts to let the precious minutes pass without honest pursuance of bounden work, are all instances of it; and moral bravery is in him who, for God's honour, for his soul's advancement, in penance for sin, forces himself to the prescribed labour. The good spirit in this wide field of morality reveals to one many an interesting opportunity of rendering homage to the Most High, and of increasing the health and wealth and beauty of one's soul in homely circumstances of life. In connection with duty, what courage—evangelical courage—courage resembling, as little things may resemble great, the spirit that made saints—some people would show if they would but retire every night in good time! And as condition to that, say their prayers in time! And, as condition to that, undergo the pain of breaking off the conversation, or the reading, in time! How many an Irish farmer would have lived to honoured old age, with his native air blowing healthful breezes on his ruddy cheek as he trod his own green hills, and ample store of this world's goods for him and his household, and, after death, have gone to Heaven, had he had the courage of Christian spirit of duty—the Christian spirit of duty that would have seized heart and body on the fair green of the town as soon as his business had concluded, and pressed him back to his farmstead, and to prompt resumption of the work to be done therein! Lack of that courage—lack of that love for our Lord, and sense of Christian self-denial—led to the unmanly and unchristian waste of time and money in town gossip, and amidst the manifold evil influences of the drinking-house, and sent him to discreditable exile, and speedy death, and not always happy death, under the torrid sun rays of some foreign prairie or amongst the befouling slums of some foreign city.

The courage that is demanded for the fulfilment of duty that is directly sacred is well worthy of our

concern. Question all sons of the Church who have failed to "render to God the things that are God's"—who have failed in bounden exercises of religion: if they search wisely for the cause, and tell it truly, they will say that the courage to oppose nature's sluggishness, or control nature's harmful lightness, was wanting. Fallen nature is, in regard to practice of piety, as a lump of clay in regard to active exercise. There is no activity in a lump of clay; it does naught but lie inert where men have placed it. In order that man do what his higher interests call for, something that is not of nature must be injected into him—a moral dynamite that will stir the inert mass of fallen nature and send it leaping and bounding on the way of God's command and God's invitation. This moral dynamite is the courage bestowed by grace. Scarce is it likely that one in this auditory does the crime of losing Mass of obligation. But, taking the word "duty" in the less strict sense that is familiar to us, calling by the name "religious duties" the common practices of piety to which there is no binding under sin—observe, brethren, what courage effects in souls, and what spiritual poverty and weakness is caused for coward souls. Fear of the trouble of spiritual activity prevails with many; "legion" is the name of the Catholic who loses daily Mass, not through obstacle of health or occupations that may not be postponed, but through disinclination for forms of energetic exercise which give pleasure only to the Almighty; which do not offer attractive aspect to the natural appetites. Men lie abed, or do something which brings some slight temporal gain, or do nothing, whilst they in whom is the strength of will to speak every morning the word of command by voice of conscience, bidding the body rise and march to the work of God, take their heavenward flight at each beginning of day, and, along with unseen angels, surround the holy altar when the ineffable mystery is done, and return to their homes enriched by God's plentiful benedictions.

A proof of courage which presents subject of specially interesting and profitable study is the control of nature's sluggishness in order to the reverent performance of

religious exercises. Prayer is "elevation of the soul to God." It is languid, inert nature that has to be elevated, or—to say the same in other form—it is languid, inert nature that is asked to do the disrelished work of elevating itself to communion with God in prayer. Unto this, effort is needed, and effort to arouse the mental powers in connection with the unseen world demands the strength of will which we know as courage. The many who lament the difficulty of praying with recollection are witnesses to this. If the prayer be protracted, even to the duration of some minutes, they whom generous piety of years has not enriched with prayerful virtue feel notable difficulty in maintaining the attention which earnest servants of God desire. Here we have illustration of the difference between the power we possess over the material faculties of the body and that which we possess over the faculties of the mind. "I command my hand or foot," said St Augustine, "and it obeys; I command my spirit and it obeys not." Over the material body we hold despotic power, and, in normal condition of the physical being, we move the members at will with facility. The mental faculties we govern, not by despotic, but by political authority; they do not obey as a matter of course, as do the exterior powers. Effort of will is called for to set and maintain them in action; and when it is with the concern of the invisible world, the things we see not, touch not, hear not with the ear, we are to entertain ourselves, the needful effort of will is made only by those in whom there is earnest appreciation of spiritual goods, and ambition to secure them. Many men, if provoked to the effort by challenge, or taunt, or wager, can do certain portions of the programme of saints' lives; can sleep on bare floor, take bread and water in place of solid meat for food—for brief time, be it understood; but find the man who, from the commencement of Mass till its close, keeps his mind uninterruptedly on God, or does the same for the length of five decades of the rosary, or makes habitual effort to do so, and you have found one whose will is firmly fixed in the desire for spiritual good. That habitual, effective desire for spiritual good involves a striving against the sluggishness of nature which is blessed

sign of the virtue of fortitude. Such a man has the courage of which we treat. This moral strength is of special advantage to the soul, since they who bravely persist in the endeavour to pray with recollection bid fair to fulfil the other conditions of prayer—to pray well; and they who pray well go to Heaven. On the other hand, cowardice in this gravely prejudices one's spiritual weal. Let the enemy do us hurt in other ways: successfully tempt to violation of the law; through the arrangements of merciful Providence we may, with comparative facility, rise after the fall. But let him successfully tempt us to stand on the low level of shirking becoming effort after recollection in prayer, and let this low level be our chronic condition; then is there reason to fear lest we set up an obstacle to the reception of the Divine aid without which salvation may not be.

Coward attitude *leads to sin*; coward attitude *detains the soul in sin*. Therefore, besides the courage which preserves from sin, there is a courage needed to rise from sin, and undo the injury which sin has inflicted.

The cowardice which prevents the uprising from sin is seen in doleful form in those who tremble before the difficulty, partly real, but mainly imaginary, of returning to the friendship of God. Members of the Christian fold who have lost grace—who have, in some instances, gone down deep into the abyss of evil, and lived long in the cold shade of sinful state—have not rarely their passing hours of seeming good disposition. Fear of being lost; fear of death and of the dread judgment to follow it; remorse for their folly, and for the disedifying influence of their evil-doing—these things agitate the breasts of sinners, when the sinners are of the true Church. But alas! those feelings often generate unsanctifying trouble, and nothing more. The burden of sin is permitted to press them down, and its enslaving chains to bind them. Wherefore this insensate toleration of an evil which causes unhappiness, and which, in the taking it to oneself, and in the maintenance of it, is one's own doing? Cowardice is the explanation. Fear of the process that must be gone through in order to bring about reconciliation with God;

fear of the difficulty of returning to God's loving embrace; fear of the real difficulty, which is small; fear of imagined difficulty, which is great. And the fear is of various classes according to the variety of stage in the process of conversion which excites the harmful timidity. One poor sinner is held back by the dread prospect of preparing himself for confession. He has not the courage to look into his own heart; to search through it in order to set before him the detailed evil he has done. He holds the general remembrance that he has peopled his inner being with unlovely things; like dweller in haunted house, he lives entirely in the front parlour, fearing to take lamp in hand and boldly visit the attic and cellars and back passages, where he may encounter unlovely things.—Another fears doing his part in the programme of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This fear of confession is as a lofty mountain for the greatness of the perdition it works in many souls; it is as an infinitesimal grain of dust for the contemptible lack of reason that characterises it. There is before me the figure of one whom concordant testimony of all his acquaintance would tabulate among men of uncommon courage. The African lion in his angriest mood he would almost face; were call made on him by some noble cause, no hardship of dismal dungeon, nor terrors of the scaffold, would hold him back from striking a blow in championship of right. One thing that heart of signal fortitude fears: let the suggestion be made, which has oft been made, that he should rise from his place in the nave of the church, enter one of those structures of merciful significance which are ranged along the aisles, and—make his confession!—before what his foolish fancy and the Evil One who wants his soul have trained him to judge the formidable difficulty of that operation, the heart within him shrivels up, and paralysing fear asserts itself. The strong chain of this unholy fear holds him fast in Satan's bondage! Dearest brethren, one inclines to ask, in the formula employed by St Paul: "Insensate man, who hath bewitched you?" I have read in the Holy Book: "Blessed is the man who feareth the Lord!" Ah, yes! blessed were the chosen three when, before the

blazing splendour of the Divine Master on Mount Thabor, and at sound of the voice from Heaven, they "fell upon their faces, and were very much afraid." Rightly did they fear in the ancient days when Heaven's floodgates were opened, and the raining deluge came down, every drop a message from the Creator's wrath. Fear, unsanctifying, unprofitable fear shall be opportune when on the doomsday men shall call on the mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of the angry God. But, God in the confessional! God in His gracious sweetness! on His throne of love! with smile on His countenance, and arms open wide to embrace—saints? no—sinners!—fear of Him there and then; fear such as I have described; fear which bars the way of the sinner to Divine forgiveness—let us call it, brethren, indecent criminality. Criminality is all indecent; this, signally so.

See the sinner freed from bondage. He is then face to face with the law which commands reform of life. Again is courage needed. Evil custom has established itself in him; wrongdoing has gained enhancement of its attractiveness. The will, long used to yield to evil, has been weakened; associations have been created which make temptation more probable, and stronger when it comes. Distinguished model of penitents, in the person of St Augustine, has described one aspect of evil customs, their pleading blandishments addressed to him who was once their slave, and whom grace was inviting to better life. He heard them as old friends whom he was abandoning cry: "And wilt thou leave us? And how wilt thou live without us?" Moreover, for the evil liver who would henceforth walk in innocence, and, in his degree, for the careless and tepid one who would ascend to fervent life, there is difficulty—here again, in part real, in part imagined, because of the enemy's deception—from this, that the improved life they would live is as a strange land, therefore looked on with sense of timidity. The new way—the constant victorious combating of passions—the constant saying "Nay" to solicitations of nature—the whipping of sluggish nature to attitude of duty whenever the Divine claims make call on it—this is a prospect which

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terrifies, which threatens, at least, to terrify, those who have not habit of years of fidelity to lean upon.

Because of all this, brethren, the "stags" must be "prepared." Spiritual cowardice, in all its prejudice to the soul's weal, must be overcome. Man's weak spirit must be strengthened to break all bonds and march forward boldly in the way that leads to his blissful destiny. Wherefore, hail to the blessed agency which is God's prophylactic against the disease of cowardice that would lead to the soul's ruin! "The Voice of the Lord prepareth the stags." If the soldier's nerves should relax when the hour comes for stepping forth to the field of combat, bracing current is sent through him when the band pours out its martial strains. The Lord's holy word, in Scripture texts far too numerous for citing, sounds the stimulating note that should nerve every Christian heart to bold attitude in face of moral difficulties, with humblest trust in the oft-pledged help of the Most High. Remember, brethren, God's way when delivering to man's weakness commission to be executed for the Divine honour, and seeming to exceed human power. "Fear not, I am with thee!" was the inspiriting formula of the Almighty. Man's contention with all forces that would move him to sin is combat enjoined on him by the great Creator; in that combat, if ever, may we take to ourselves the cheering assurance: "Fear not, I am with thee!" Well did the prophet king know that fine truth, and through him has the Holy Spirit delivered to us striking preparation of the stags in the soul-stirring outburst of his twenty-sixth psalm: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? . . . If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear." That holy trust in Heaven's aid was on his inspired lips; the same was in his heart, and nerved his arm, on the memorable day when he fought on the plain of Terebinth. The Philistine giant had "helmet of brass on his head, and was clothed with a great coat of mail . . . and he had greaves of brass on his legs, and a buckler of brass covered his shoulders, and the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the

head of his spear weighed six hundred sicles of iron," so that "all the Israelites when they saw the man fled from his face, fearing him exceedingly" (1 Kings xvii.). One only quailed not before the formidable Philistine. It was David, mere boy, slightly built, having neither shield nor spear. To the giant son of Anak he spoke—take his words, brethren, in reverent eagerness—they give out faith and fighting resolve and simple trust in Providence—"Thou comest to me with a sword and a spear and with a shield; I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts!" In the name of the Lord of Hosts he slung the light pebble from the brook, and smote to death his mighty foe. Let Goliath stand for every fierce temptation, and the story preaches robust confidence—saving, sanctifying courage—when combat is to be waged for God.

Is there among those who hear me one who trembles and is overcome when the charms of dangerous occasion gleam before his eyes and speak their evil solicitations to him? Let this timid soul be strengthened by the voice of the Lord: "If thy right eye scandalise thee, pluck it out!" It is better to go into Heaven after having denied oneself many pleasing experiences than, after doing one's own will and tasted brief gratification on earth, lose everlasting life.

The cowardice which, while harming the soul, is dishonouring to the Almighty, is shamed for all who listen to the Holy Word, which gives, not the vain conceit of foolish men, but God's own declaration of encouraging mercy: "Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy burdened, and I will refresh you!" Still more moving towards trust in the providence of infinite kindness is that oracle, known to all who have learned even surface exposition of Christian doctrine, as to the dealing of the Lord by the man whose sins exceed the sands of the seashore. Finally—nothing in the revelation of the Divine arrangements connected with man's destiny has been set forth more clearly than this: we are not commanded—we are not even asked—to conquer in the spiritual combat alone; the weakness of man is bidden to win the eternal crown only when fortified by the unfailing aid of Heaven's grace.

THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD.

PREACHED IN ST MARY'S, YOUGHAL, ON OCCASION OF THE SACERDOTAL GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE RT. REV. MGR. KELLER, P.P., V.G., DEAN OF CLOYNE, *26th August*, 1912.

"Come and behold the works of the Lord; what wonders He hath done upon earth" (45th Psalm).

MAY it please your Lordship—Very Rev. Fathers, and dearest faithful—How meagre is our knowledge of the truths revealed by God. How dull our sense in all that concerns the things of God. Since our coming into the world religion has wrapt us round; yet how poor is our knowledge of its mysteries. Names of sublime things are familiar to us, and definitions; formulas which state and explain certain truths of revelation our lips can readily pronounce; questioned even in tender years we were able to tell the wonders of God's dealings with mankind. But how superficial our thought on those august truths! How slight the stirrings of our hearts in connection with the stupendous things of which religion tells! The reflection leads one to think of the inspired words in the Book of Wisdom: "The corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things" (Ch. IX, 15). For many men things of earth and sense monopolise thought and interest. The delusive charm of material things has cast a spell upon them; the world's enjoyments make too loud a noise in the ears of many Christians, and not rarely evil passions generate a storm in the heart which silences the voice of the Divine Spirit when He invites men to study the exalted truths whereof faith tells.

Our sacred feasting here this morning brings to mind an

element in our religion well deserving earnest thought. Solemn celebration of the Divine mysteries is made on ordinary week-day to mark the interesting fact that fifty years have gone by since hands were imposed in priestly ordination on him who is the Pastor of Youghal and Dean of the Diocesan Chapter.

Fifty years of priesthood! The priesthood we have been in close relationship with from infancy. The functions which belong to it we have often witnessed. But in those functions, and in the powers they demand, there is revelation of the Most High transcending the reach of the acutest faculty of human mind. The priesthood is among the corollaries of the Incarnation. God's Eternal Son, coming in passible flesh to ransom our fallen race, was to effect that ransom by offering expiatory sacrifice. Sacrifice should be offered by a priest; therefore He came—a priest. Priest: victim likewise. Since the victim was Divine, and the offering priest Divine, that sacrifice was all-sufficing for men's salvation; it wrought what the Psalmist named "plentiful redemption." Let the world of men last through bewildering cycles of centuries, sufficient redeeming merit for all generations has been acquired by the sacrifice offered on Calvary. "By one oblation He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," and, "being consummated, He became to all that obey Him the cause of eternal salvation." So wrote St Paul to the Hebrews. So truly all-sufficing was the One Sacrifice that it would bear to be offered till the end of time. And His priesthood was so truly all-sufficing that the ministers whom He should ordain to offer through all ages the commemorative sacrifice were to be but sharers of His one and only priesthood. In making the great oblation, they were to stand in His place, speak His word, and employ His Divine power.

The Christian world knows the striking thing He did. He called men from the common ways of life; drew them into intimate association with Himself; taught them; formed them in His own school; then, before mounting to Heaven, He sent His hallowing breath and laid His consecrating hand upon them, making them priests for ever. And His oracular word declared their sublime

mission: "As the Father hath sent Me, I send you." The priest was to be intermediary between God and mankind: from Him Who died on the Cross the sacred laver of redemption flowed; to reach the souls of men it was to pass through the consecrated person of the priest: from Satan's slavery mankind was loosed by the sacrifice of the Cross; the Evil One, seeing individual souls snatched from his unholy grasp, was to see it done by the ministry of the human priest, armed with authorisation from Jesus Christ. and bearing in his hands the life-giving Blood of the world's Redeemer.

All this exalted science, brethren, is familiar to us. Nevertheless, let us, surrendering ourselves to the suggestive influence of the occasion, make reflection on some functions of the Christian priesthood which have special and immediate connection with our souls' weal. Recall that significant breathing of the Divine Master on His disciples. Remember the words He then spoke: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins ye shall forgive they are forgiven!" Simple speech. But simple speech in the beginning of things brought forth the vast universe—simple speech, with power Divine behind it. The Church's great doctor, St Augustine, has said that a greater feat than the creation of the world is the uplifting of a sinner to grace. See the man in whom is wrought the melancholy revolution of mortal sin. When in grace the smile of God's love beamed upon him, a lovelier thing than loveliest beam from sun or moon. By act of sin he is made God's enemy. The soul which was beautiful beyond our power of fancying has become a foul thing, worse than all repulsive sights mortal eye has seen. Before the tragedy of sin he was a very tabernacle within which, as truly as in the glory of Heaven, the Great God dwelt; by grave sin God is driven forth, and, in His stead, the enemy of God and man has come, and seated himself as on his throne within the wretched being! The soul in sin is dead; and he who is in sin, going about the world, to outward seeming the same as in his day of innocence, bears within him a more loathsome thing than putrefying corpse! Supreme element in the evil of sin, from the mere human side—and great

must be the bewitching of Satan and bad passions that hinders men's remembrance of it—the man in sin has but to experience sudden arrest of his heart's action in order to go into the place of unending pain. This dark picture of the sinner's state is a background against which there stands out in bright colours the wondrous endowment Heaven has conferred on the priest. Let the prayer of charitable friend—prayer of pious wife or child—move the Divine mercy to whisper a gracious call to the wretched man; let salutary movement of grace be effected in him; let him, under its saving influence, kneel before the Church's minister, and with bounden disposition declare his wrongdoing; let the priest speak the judgment of mercy over him, with absolving benediction, and lo! the heavens are opened, and whence there came in the days of Noah cataracts of destroying purpose there descend the waters of mercy to purify the soul; the clouds that lowered over the sinner are uplifted, and the sunbeams of beautifying grace shine upon him once again!

The very richness of Divine mercy in multiplication of this prodigy is cause why we are not affected with a thousandth part of the holy sensation it should produce. By a sort of law that rules the human fancy, a healing, cleansing and uplifting feat ineffably less avails more to strike the imagination. Into hospital ward of great city, where hundreds are prostrate in mortal disease, let there enter one of preternatural endowment, and, under the spell of his wondrous power, let every suffering one leap up, freed from disease and pain, and with bounding sense of health through all his frame. Or—greater thing—let the wonder-worker betake himself, not to hospital ward, but to the cemetery at yonder North Abbey, where many of your loved ones sleep the sleep of death. See a man of God stand in the midst of that abode of the dead; see him upraise his head and make the sacred sign, and, at the sound of his voice, see the graves render up their tenants: see your long-buried dear ones come forth, in reality of life and vigour, and give themselves once again to your fond embrace. That sight has not been seen, and, when it shall be seen, all the world shall hear of it, and myriad voices

shall give utterance to the gladsome wonder it shall produce. But all they in whom shines the light that comes from the other world, the light of fine spirit of faith, know that greater and more gladsome achievement is done through the sacramental ministration of the priest. Not the upraising a dead body and restoring it to a life and an energy of movement possessed by the beasts of the field, but the vivifying a dead soul. Death of the soul is supreme evil; evil enduring after all other evils have ceased with the body's death; forfeiture of supreme, eternal good, and consignment to supreme pain for ever and ever. It is undone by the stupendous power of the priest.

And stupendous is the means whereby he perpetrates the miracle of wondrous gladness. On the day when He breathed upon the young Levite and blessed and annointed him in sacerdotal consecration, God placed in his hands the Blood which was shed for the world's salvation. From the holiest of creatures it first came; it was transmitted to Infinite God in His becoming Man; it is therefore Divine Blood, source of all-cleansing, strengthening, illuminating and sanctifying grace, fullest ransom for the whole lost race of Adam. Before the least drop thereof archangels fall down in profoundest worship, and with thrilling wonder do they behold it in the hand of mere man, and in his person the power to use it for giving life to the soul that was dead. When the absolving deed is done, and they behold him who had entered the tribunal Satan's bond-slave come forth in the beauteous light of grace to the liberty of the sons of God, those blessed spirits, ignoring the ninety-nine just ones who stand beside him, pour out song of thankful praise for the triumph of Heaven's mercy, wrought through the stupendous power of the priesthood. Stupendous power! Power not understood to the full even by those spirits of light. God alone has plumbed the depths of it! Dearest brethren, have I said that God alone has plumbed the depths of it? It is God Who does the wondrous thing. Not the man whose dwelling-place is the parochial house; not he whose hand you grasp in the relations of friendship, whom you sit beside in council on public boards, with whom you are wont to enjoy friendly conversation.

Or, if the same—and the same man, doubtless, it is—your priest pouring the Divine Blood on the sinner's soul, is all overshadowed by the Deity; caught up into God, into awful union with God; associated with God in ineffable intercourse, in a startling identity of place and power. For behold the priest says not, "May God absolve thee"; he utters oracle from God Himself; his absolving formula is: "I absolve thee from thy sins!" The Scribes of Capharnaum spoke wisely when they asked: "Who can forgive sins but only God?" Only He Whose majesty is offended by sin can pardon sin. Wherefore, when the priest, with authorisation from the Almighty, says to the sinner and does the thing he says—"I absolve thee from thy sins"—the priest is shown to be—dearest brethren, what shall I say the priest is shown to be?—language for just expression of it is not given one; it is best to go the way of the holy souls who have made deep thought upon it, and again deep thought, so that by profound and reverent study they have acquired approach to becoming sense of the sacred divinity of the priesthood. The assertion of it by sainted doctors of the Church is matter for amazement. "The priesthood," said St John Chrysostom, "is exercised on earth, but it is a thing of Heaven!" The same light of the Church, considering the raising of a sinful man from the gates of Hell, exclaiming: "The priest is another Christ!"

In study of this department of religious truth, brethren, "deep calleth on deep." He who has been washed by the Precious Blood through the ministration of the priest encounters ere long other manifestation of sacerdotal power not less wonderful than that which we have considered. And, dull in religious sense must the mass of Christians be to give such slight thought to prodigies wrought in their midst each day that passes.

Twelve months gone by there was cut down in a district not far from where we are assembled a smiling field of corn. The winnowed grain was thrashed; sent to the mill, it was ground into flour; that flour sent to a convent in the city of Cork, and there blended with the simple element of water, was made into bread—unleavened bread. Not many

days since that bread was brought to the sacristy adjoining this Church. It was taken thence before the commencement of the ceremonial of the Mass, and at this moment lies on that credence table—lies there, mere bread, made by a simple woman. As I speak one of the youths serving the altar may take it in hand, break it, pass it to a companion, or cast it on the ground. Within the hour that passes the deacon will bring it to the altar; at the appointed stage in the ceremonial the celebrating priest will take it in his hand; will bend over it—over simple bread—will speak words which God has ruled he should speak, and the bread!—there shall be bread no longer—that which is now bread shall be the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God! At that solemn crisis in the sacred procedure tolling bell shall announce that the stupendous change has taken place, and we shall bow down to adore the Body which was born in Bethlehem, that walked through Judea, that was slain on the Cross! Not we alone, but unseen spirits from Heaven who encompass the altar during the performance of the great mystery shall do reverence. Those glorious spirits of light shall recognise, where sight and touch and discrimination of mere human nature would judge there was still bread, the same Omnipotent Being Whom through unnumbered ages they have worshipped amid the splendours of Heaven. May not one indulge the fancy that while those noble spirits adore the sacred host, cherub shall say to seraph that this son of Adam who stands at the altar has done a prodigy surpassing all their angelic faculties; and Thrones and Powers and Dominations shall confess the wonder, and magnify the Lord Who has commissioned the priest to do a miracle which not the highest and holiest in the nine choirs is able to effect. More startling wonder still—if those celestial spirits look up to the dizzy heights whereon their Queen, God's Great Mother, is enthroned, they shall know that not even she can do the thing that is done by the consecrating words of the priest. In this sublime mystery, as in his exercise of the power of the keys, the priest is assumed into awful identity with the Divine Redeemer, for it is in the person of the Son of God he pronounces

the words of transubstantiating power: not "This is the Body of Christ" does he speak, but "This is My Body."

Dearest brethren, one whose part it is to speak from the pulpit on this ineffable mystery inclines to wish that, if 'twere possible, he might, for some minutes' space, be changed into a layman, that, freed from embarrassing delicacy, he might tell, to such extent as it may be told, the reverence due to the man whom the providence of God has uplifted to the dignity of the Christian priesthood. But short time has passed since, conforming to counsel received during college training, I uncovered my head when passing a priest, one younger than myself by many years. "Is that mark of respect customary with you?" asked a friend who walked beside me. "Yes," I replied, "I never meet without reverent salutation the man who, by sacred power wherewith God has endowed him, can change particle of bread into the adorable Body of Jesus Christ. Let one, not himself a priest, one richly illumined by the Holy Spirit, whom humanity did not permit to accept the priestly office—let Francis of Assisi speak his thought: "Were I to meet an angel and a priest, I should salute the priest first." There is the feeling and attitude of a man whom faith guided. To the judgment of faith, the greatest among human beings that walk the earth is not he whose income is expressed in millions; not the brilliant leader of armed hosts; not the founder of philosophic school; not the imperial monarch, in regal splendour clad:—the highest dignity that graces earth is the dignity of the Christian priesthood. "He hath set you," wrote St Bernard to a community of priests, "above kings and emperors; nay, He hath set you above the angels!" "The sacerdotal honour"—thus St Ambrose, the great Father of the fourth century—"The sacerdotal honour can be equalled by no comparisons!" Comparison was made by another teacher of sacred truth, St Bernardine of Siena. St Bernardine is the seraphic preacher who thus addresses the Mother of God: "Virgin most blessed—excuse me—I speak nothing against thee;—He Himself has placed the priesthood above thee!"

The priestly dignity, like Him from Whom it has come,

is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel. St Francis and all who are heartily on God's side entertain for the priesthood reverence and love. Men banded together in France, Italy, and Portugal under the unholy standard of freemasonry look on the priest with hate. Freemasonry and Francis of Assisi are guided by the same principle. The saint knows that the priest represents God, God's law, and God's interests, and therefore cherishes loving reverence. The agents of the Evil One know that the priest represents God; therefore against the priest their wicked plots; for the priest chains and foul dungeon; and against his influence over men in God's behalf all the evil ingenuity of writer, orator, and lawmaker. Be it remembered that the Divine Master made provision against our being scandalised when witnessing this condition of things: "If they have called the good man of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?" The same sacred authority spoke the word of startling import—spoke it to His chosen ministers: "You shall be hated by all men for My Name's sake." Men who lend favourable ear to the protest of fallen nature against the unwelcome Gospel—who are unwilling to bear the coercive law of God—incline to hate the purpose of the priest's office. Hence, when either individual or nation begins to tread the path that leads away from God, significant symptom of the sad defection, of that spiritual suicide for man or nation, is seen in diminished respect for the Lord's consecrated minister.

For us, dearest brethren, whatsoever be the attitude of unholy folly to be assumed in the future of which we are being given sinister promise, we may entertain bold confidence that He Who gave strength to His tried servants in all generations will sustain us to bear the word of insult, the binding manacles, the wounding of the scourge, the pricks of the thorny crown, and, should it come to that, the cruel nails that fasten to the Cross. For, after all, "the servant is not above his Master." But for the chosen people in the Old Dispensation 'twere better had they maintained the attitude of reverent greeting assumed on Palm Sunday morning, and not been perverted to the black

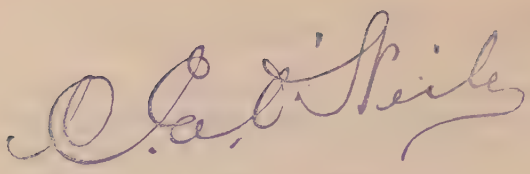
impiety of the Friday which followed; better for their children and children's children; better for the fortune of the holy city; better for their national reputation; better for them in time and for eternity.

The sacerdotal office and functions being the sublime thing we have studied, there seems call made on the faithful, when a man has for fifty years borne the sacred honour and gone through its sublime functions, to make festival in spirit of jubilee; to praise the Lord for half a century of blessings, and supplicate yet more favours on His servant. On how many souls has not your pastor poured the Redeemer's saving blood! How many has he not snatched from the grasp of the Evil One! How many, soiled by sin, has he not washed in Bethsaida's pool! Into how many hearts, wounded by various evil influences, has he not poured Gilead's balm of spiritual consolation! Of those on whom his consecrated hand has been laid some look down upon him on this festive day from thrones in Heaven, and tell the Great Master that to his priestly services they owe the grace they possessed in life, the peace wherein they died, and the crowns they wear in the happy kingdom.

You, people of Youghal, who for eight-and-twenty years have looked to him as your pastor, expect, doubtless, that I should touch on the personal aspect which this celebration presents. It has been enjoined on me, in the name of a friendship that has now lasted many years, that no personal note should sound in the day's utterance from the pulpit beyond the word that craves from his people a fervid prayer that God, Who has preserved him in the world for many years, may take him out of the world by the way of a holy death. They who know him best know that in that request now spoken in his name, is expressed his whole and sole ambition. There are here not a few who will pray that, as condition of holier ending of life, Heaven's providence may ordain for him yet many years of fruitful priestly work.

When the end comes, dearest of friends, may it come enriched with all the blessings for which your Christian heart yearns! May the works of fifty years meet you and

"praise you in the gates!" May every child on whose head you poured the regenerating waters speak well of you to the Great High Priest! May every erring one whom you led back to God stand as trophy of your zeal, with loud and effective pleading in the ear of your Judge! May the tender ones of the flock—the innocent children on whom was expended preferential share of your pastoral zeal—cluster round you for creditable testimony before Him for Whose sake you loved them! If—may Heaven's merciful ordinance forbid the tragedy—if of those whom God has entrusted to your care there should be on the doomsday even one on whom the frown of the Judge shall fall, may the spirit of evil, in the very hour of his triumphant gloating over such one, be forced to confess that never, in the course of your pastorate, did he uplift his hand to smite soul of man, woman, or child within the borders of Youghal Parish but he encountered you as angel with flaming sword in hand, prepared to defend, even at the cost of your heart's blood, every soul which the Church's authority confided to you! One last thing heart and conscience bid me speak: when the history of this puny world shall have been wound up, and, the number of the elect being fulfilled, the Master shall take you up the shining way, admit you through the pearl gate, and set you on a throne to enjoy the unending Jubilee of His Kingdom, may all who have gathered round you for this day's festive celebration be there to see!



FREDERICK OZANAM—HIS GREAT CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL, QUEENSTOWN, IN AID OF THE LOCAL CONFERENCE OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL, *17th August*, 1913.

"HE hath distributed; he hath given to the poor; his justice remaineth for ever and ever; his horn shall be exalted in glory." That passage, dear brethren, from the one hundredth and eleventh psalm of David was read by the officiating priest when he ascended the altar to-day. The Church has deemed it suitable for the Introit of the Mass on this day of her feasting the Patriarch, St Joachim, father of Our Most Blessed Lady. "He hath given to the poor; his justice endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted in glory." It is well that this inspired commendation of giving to the poor is proclaimed on the occasion of the appeal from the local conference of the Society of St Vincent de Paul. And it is well for him who would advocate the cause of the Society to-day that there is just now interesting enhancement of its ordinary claim on the attention of the Christian community. The Society has within the past few months celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the man to whom it owes its existence. Standing here to stimulate your interest in the work of the Queenstown conference let me invite your thought to a brief glance at the figure of Frederick Ozanam, whose memory shall, as long as the world goes round, be powerful inspiration to Christian benevolence.

It calls for no high educational power—the mind of the common man is equal to it—to make study, in profitable degree, of what is known as the philosophy of history. And students of the philosophy of history may easily note

that special activity of the forces of moral evil has often been the occasion of signal display of God's gracious providence. It was when the pestilential teaching of the Albigensian sect threatened the destruction of men's spiritual and temporal interest in the fairest provinces of Southern Europe that my great father, St Dominic, flashed upon the world, and made victorious combat against the dread enemy of the commonweal. More than three centuries later the floodgates of error were let loose in the rebellion of the apostate monk, and it seemed as though, within the puny world of man, there was to be a repetition of the tragedy that was enacted when mighty Lucifer fell and brought with him a third part of the hosts of Heaven. In that fateful hour all-ruling Providence called forth the great Ignatius of Loyola, who in the saving name of Jesus crossed the path of the destroying angel, and rolled back the tide of evil which threatened almost general subversion of Christian faith.

Among the cataclysms which have imperilled the highest interest of men place may justly be assigned to the great French Revolution. It was " revolution " in the thorough sense of the name. Altar and throne were overturned; order was subverted; Society in its normal condition destroyed. And since order is for the general well-being, evil came for all classes; evil that for long held triumphant place, and must have led men almost to despair of restoration of right in the ill-fated land. In its chief city it was as though God, with all that told of His loving rule over men, had disappeared. His divinely constituted representative, the Church, was recognised, but, according to oft-repeated cry in college hall, in festive assembly and in the public way, she was recognised as the enemy of man's weal. The intellect of the great city was up in arms against her; the ingenious energies of politicians were directed against her; the mind and heart of the populace, deluded and empoisoned by malevolent guides, were in opposition to her.

When Frederick Ozanam was emerging into manhood the anti-Christian spirit, if it had begun to languish, received fillip from a second revolution in the year 1830.

So far had the insensate city drifted from the way of bounden homage to the Most High that it was said that the sight of a member of the male sex in the Temple of God would have created as great wonder as the sight of a Christian in a Mohammedan mosque. The light of faith was extinguished in men's minds; they spoke, at least, as though it were so. The profession of faith by least religious word or act would have been met by violent attack or jeering insult. Of a truth, some reason was given for the view of those unused to think under the guidance of Christian wisdom when they judged that Christianity, after a chequered career of eighteen hundred years, was at length dead. Christianity dead! And seeing that its doctrines, spirit and laws had been inconvenience to the self-love of fallen man, it was for fallen man, emancipated from bondage, to execute over its grave the dance of impious triumph.

It is a law of social life, brethren—so stable a characteristic that one may speak of it as a law—that where Christian truth has been once received, and the influence of Christian civilisation felt in the forms of public life, if that sacred truth and civilising influence be rejected, there results from that pulling down of the spiritual power such disarrangement of the social condition as leads to inequitable distribution of the bountiful Creator's gifts. When the anointed figure which represents the kingdom of grace is stricken down, unholy usurper, embodying the spirit of fallen nature, mounts the vacant throne, and exercises his pernicious sway over men. And fallen nature has this among its unlovely elements—it grasps for self. Hunger and thirst for that which favours self are at the very heart's core of it. When the lights of Heaven are extinguished, when Society is blessed by no control from above, the grasping spirit is let loose. There follows abnormal enrichment of some, pinching want for others. Much will have more, and if injustice and cruelty to their fellow-men give promise of increase of already abundant store, the injustice and cruelty are done by those who have cast off the yoke of the Christian gospel. Cruel injustice is responded to either by sullen hate which meditates fierce

revenge, or by violent outburst which is wont but to add still more to the piled mass of evil. Then is seen the war of classes—strike and counter-strike; sin begetting misery, and misery begetting sin—all through forgetfulness of the salutary philosophy taught to the Galatians by the great prophet who came forth from Tarsus of Cilicia—"All the law is fulfilled in one word—thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and the warning he appended—"If you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another." Ah, yes, brethren, the casting off God, by gainsaying the teaching, subverting the authority, trampling on the rights and rejecting the saving ministrations of the only Body which represents Him, is the sowing of the wind, which involves the reaping of destructive whirlwind. "Godliness," wrote the same St Paul to Timothy, "is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Evil, then, was the time when Frederick Ozanam, scarce more than a boy, stood forth before the public gaze. High praise is uttered of him when it is said that he seemed the minister of Heaven's Providence for the noble work of stemming the tide of evil. Not in the common mould had Ozanam been cast. Genius has been defined as the power of taking infinite pains. The implication of the definition is that by exquisite taking of pains ordinary gifts can be elevated to genius. Not ordinary gifts had Nature bestowed on Ozanam; she had richly endowed him; she gave him talent to acquire vast and profound learning of varied kind, and she added a talent which set all his talents to the amassing of abounding profit—the talent of taking pains, the glorious gift of magnificent energy in the use of magnificent powers. Sixteen to eighteen hours a day of study by one of luminous intellect set him in eminent rank as *littérateur*, poet, man of science and orator. They who saw the radiations that came from the mental acquirements of Frederick Ozanam saw how grand a man the Lord can make when it pleases Him to open His bounteous hand more lavishly than is His wont. Such was Ozanam by nature. It may be that the elevating tendency of his

natural gifts made it easier for grace to lay hold of the man. Grace did lay hold of him; it bore him along a programme of activity which brought signal blessings to his own generation, and has won for him imperishable fame in the Church of God.

This brilliant genius, at an age when the majority are yet under the influence of the lighter thoughts and tendencies of boyhood, cast anxious gaze at the condition of the world around him. In the elect sons of Adam there is heard in the morning of life a voice which possesses serious significance for listening conscience. It speaks in the heart, but speaks with suspicion of credentials that intimate higher authority than that which resides in the heart of man. At first the voice is heard with uncertain ear, and its message is but vaguely apprehended, for its whisper is soft and low; there comes an hour when it delivers its message in imperious tone that proclaims August Supremacy in the Speaker. It is the voice of God —of God sending a call to His creature. The call of God came to Ozanam, the call to use life for the glory of the Most High through promotion of the good of his fellowmen. He would first devote himself, and his eminent, natural powers and brilliant acquirements to the cause of the charity of the spirit—the combating the evil forces which were harming the soul of the nation. For this he would become a teacher and a writer. Voice and pen he would employ in mission of high philanthropy; voice expounding from professorial chair scientific and social truth; pen sending on wings of Christian zeal a saving word to all whose erring minds and disordered hearts he could reach. As professor in the University of Sorbonne he combated the mischievous influence of infidel lecturers on the faith of their pupils. Souls wounded and robbed he sought to restore to the soundness of Christian belief, and lead back to the treasures of grace offered them through prayer and Sacraments.

But the Christian heart within the man in addition to pity for souls that had suffered shipwreck of faith felt compassion for the toiling masses. Masterful study of history had told him that in the ancient days of pagan

dominance the toiling masses were humiliated and crushed in cruel bondage; their elemental rights as men ignored; and well he knew whose was the great heart that pitied them, and whose the strong hand that struck off the toilers' chains and uplifted them to the level of human dignity. God, Father of the poor, had set up the Church to represent Him to mankind. For France of his day, as for all the world, the Church was the venerable, loving mother; when rude impiety harassed her the children were driven to sigh and moan: for all the world of man the Church is the skilled and tender nurse; when irreligious cruelty drove her forth, the sick and suffering were in sad plight: the Church is of Adam's race divinely appointed Shepherd; the Shepherd stricken, the sheep are in disorder; they lack healthful pastures, and blindly rush to dread precipices, over which they fall into tragic destruction. To Ozanam's sympathetic observation a twofold enemy threatened the poor man's welfare. One, whose evil tendency was easily recognised, was that grasping spirit in the upper social grade, which, for the sake of inordinate gain, ground the humble toiler. Against this enemy of the people's weal the noble philanthropist fought by seeking to lead all whom his influence could reach to return to Christian faith—to open the heart to the return of the Christian spirit and ideal—to learn again the lesson flashed upon the world eighteen centuries before, that men of all grades are brothers, equal before the Heavenly Father, and that the privations which follow the inevitable undulations of fortune are to be lessened by the balancing influence which comes from that kindly solicitude for the needy impressed on mankind by the sacred code of the Gospel. Asserting God and His sovereign claims by eloquent vindications of faith, he gave check to rapacious selfishness as he brought to the nation's mind the stern word of the Holy Book against all who, by open injustice or diplomatic wrong, defraud the labourer of his just wage. Truth, displayed by that eloquent voice and pen, was great, and, in a large measure, prevailed. Brilliant championing of religion kindled faith in many men of culture, and emboldened not a few Catholics whom the

insolence of dominant irreligion had driven into timid obscurity.

When the Christian hero perceived that religion's idea of the relations between men had been caught by a number of men in whom intelligence and energy were united, he conceived the thought of seizing on the philanthropic thought and emotion he had enkindled and concreting it in an organised body which would prosecute with system as well as enthusiasm the work of benevolence. It was the idea—blessed for ever be the memory of the man who conceived it!—of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The Society, as conceived in the brain and heart of its noble founder, was to illustrate the truth of the praise written by the great dramatist of the quality of mercy : " It blesseth him that gives and him that receives." Men were to be uplifted by stooping to assist the poor. The organisation was to be shot through by the Christian idea, Christian purpose, Christian spirit, and Christian method, in order that the material aid the conferences would deal out to the hungry and the naked should be transformed for the members themselves into the silver and gold of Heaven's grace, and food and raiment for their own immortal souls. Oh! how beautiful to the criticism of downlooking angels were the lives of those gentlemen of Paris who marched to the relief of God's poor beneath the standard flung to the breeze by their noble leader! Striking holiness of life came of it: loving familiarity with the dear Lord dwelling in the Tabernacle; daily increase in warmth of Divine love; deaths precious in the sight of the Lord, and then thrones and crowns in the Kingdom! Gentle mercy blessing him that gives! The sweet mercy, which made the soul whereby Frederick Ozanam would have the body of the Society animated, blessed also him that received. Blessed him, not merely by stone walls and a roof to house him; not merely by filling his craving stomach and covering his limbs with raiment: " After these things do the Gentiles seek." The band of men who took the honoured name of Vincent de Paul, when encountering their needy brother, took thought for the entire human personality. Their chief solicitude was that the poor man's poverty should not be turned to the

prejudice of the transcendent interests of his soul. Those men, wise and good, praying at each conference meeting God's Holy Ghost to guide their ministrations of charity, saw many among the working class in danger from wolves, decked out as wolves, who did them hurt by cruel oppression. They saw, likewise, wolves in the clothing of sheep —wicked men with friendly profession on their lips, men who, now by seductive whisper, now by blatant speech-making and flaunting of philanthropic catch-cries on showy banners, sought to destroy the higher life, which is the chief good of every child of Adam, and to lead the sons of toil into the direst poverty of all—the most abysmal degradation of all, and the bitterest suffering of all—the soul's eternal loss! Against the pernicious counsel of that class of the poor man's enemy, Frederick Ozanam, one of the noblest and truest friends of the suffering toiler the world has ever seen, might well have used the words of Solomon the Wise, inspired by Heaven: "If sinners shall entice thee, consent not to them. If they shall say, 'Come with us; we shall find all precious substance; we shall fill our houses with spoils; cast in thy lot with us; let us all have one purse.' (Wise Solomon knew the ways of the Socialist.) My son, walk not thou with them; restrain thy foot from their paths, for their feet run to evil" (Prov. i.).

The spirit of that Divine warning was in the brothers of the Society. Their attitude of mind and heart towards their brother of the humbler class would have expressed itself thus: Let fortune visit him with temporal trial, if Heaven so permit, but let no sinister influence lead him away from God. Let him suffer want during his earthly life, but in the name of the Redeeming Blood shed for him, let him through his worst experiences have the hope of imperishable riches in God's Kingdom. And how they cared for the poor man's temporal weal—those clients of St Vincent! Pity it was that when the high authority of State in our own country conceived the design of setting up their clumsy, unholy, workhouse system they didn't have the good sense to hesitate—the good sense to see that a Protestant State authority, if it attempt to take on itself the care of God's poor, attempts a task for which it is

utterly unfit. Pity it was that they did not communicate with Frederick Ozanam, then coursing along the full tide of his beneficent enterprise, and beg that he would cross the sea and show them how the work of charity should be done. No cold, gloomy building did he erect, into which to march God's poor. No sign, hurtful to many a poor man's sensitiveness, did he devise to brand them as "paupers." No programme of ignoble idleness, whereby the virility of able-bodied men rots away and their morality is imperilled, did he draw up; nor did he, as did the unhallowed State authority in the prime element of its blundering, when he found husband hungry, wife hungry, and their dear little ones hungry, forget the sacred oracle: "what God hath joined let no man put asunder." The brothers of the Society which looks to Vincent de Paul as model and patron come together in weekly conference; there kneel and pray God's Holy Spirit to guide their counsel; then, taking the money which the Christian people give in the wisdom of secret almsgiving, they visit the cabins, the cottages, the attics where God's poor dwell in family communion. They feed the hungry bodies; they clothe the naked limbs; they comfort the drooping spirits; they advise the perplexed minds; they administer timely admonition against threatening waywardness, and so dispense friendly aid as to quicken the coming of the day when the workman may arise from his temporary distress and enjoy the proud consciousness of being once more his own bread-winner.

For all this, brethren, good reason had the banded thousands of the Society to make jubilee on the thirteenth day of April last over the hundredth anniversary of the birth of him who called it into being. Good reason had the religious lord of all the world, the holy Pope of Rome, to send one of his august councillors, clad in cardinalitial purple, to grace the magnificent assemblage wherein the city of Paris did honour to his glorious memory.

In dreams of the men who have illumined history's page and relieved the gloom of the world's life, I have sometimes inclined to envy the favoured ones who looked upon the figure of great Ozanam; to envy those who listened to

his entrancing eloquence in the halls of the Sorbonne. But, dreaming is this, and, mayhap, of little profit. The great thing in the man—that for which shining angels felicitate him where he now sits enthroned—was this: he "distributed; he gave to the poor"; he pitied the poor; he loved the poor; he put forth his hand to help the poor, and that for the honour of God. Brethren, the good of loving and helping the poor, the sacred glory of it, the everlasting reward of it, is within the reach of all: the chance of it is offered to you in this House of the Lord to-day.

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